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BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS

1776 - 1876

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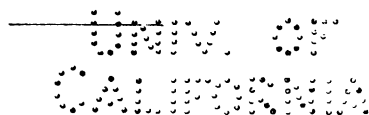
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COMMEMORATION
OF THE
BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS
ON ITS
ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
BY THE
NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
M DCCC LXXVI.

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ANNUAL

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

CELEBRATION OF THE BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS

ON ITS

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY. SEPT. 16, 1876.

The expenses of this Celebration were defrayed by the following gentlemen in subscriptions of Twenty-five Dollars each.

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THE BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS

ORATION

BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 16, 1876

BY

JOHN JAY.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
M DCCC LXXVI.

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
170 Second Avenue, New York City.
June 26th, 1876.

HON. JOHN JAY, *Bedford.*

DEAR SIR :—The Society has resolved upon an out-door celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Harlem Plains, the 16th of September next. The gathering will be in the neighborhood of the scene of action, and it is intended to have a military pageant and an oration.

It is the wish of the committee that the oration should be delivered by some New York gentleman, and our eyes naturally turn to you as a representative of old New York. I am instructed to earnestly request that you will undertake this duty, and to add that the resources of this Library will be placed at your disposal for any historical research you may desire to make in the preparation of an address.

I am very truly your obedient servant,

JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS,
Chairman of Committee on Celebrations.

BEDFORD HOUSE, KATONAH,
NEW YORK, *July 1st, 1876.*

JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, ESQ.,

Chairman Committee of the New York Historical Society.

DEAR SIR :—I beg to acknowledge your note of the 26th of June courteously advising me that I have been chosen to deliver the oration at an out-door celebration by the Historical Society of the Battle of Harlem Plains on its hundredth anniversary, the 16th of September, the gathering to be in the neighborhood of the scene of action, with a military pageant.

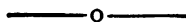
I accept, sir, with thanks, the distinguished honor thus conferred upon me, and which your committee so kindly ask me to accept; and I will undertake the task with somewhat less of diffidence from the obliging assurance of your committee that the resources of the Library will be placed at my disposal for any aid I may require.

Will you permit me to invoke your kind assistance and that of the Librarian in indicating the volumes and MSS. that bear upon the subject, as my own familiarity with the Library is not now what it was in former years when I had the pleasure of serving in the management.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, faithfully yours,

JOHN JAY.

COMMEMORATIVE ORATION.



MR. PRESIDENT, FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

OUR Centennial year, fraught with cherished memories, has brought us to the anniversary of the spirited engagements which took place on the heights and plains around us an hundred years ago, between some of the Continental troops under the command of Washington, and a part of the British army under Sir William Howe. The action for the American army and the American cause had a great significance. Our troops engaged in it represented all sections—Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England—indicating the common ties that have bound us in a common destiny, and recalling the generous thought of Patrick Henry, when he said, “I am not a Virginian—I am an American.”

It was the first success of the Americans in the New York campaign, and it occurred at a moment when both officers and men were discouraged by disaster and retreat, and mortified and alarmed at an exhibition of panic the day before, which had wounded their self-respect, and impaired their courage and their hopes.

It developed the bravery and spirit of our newly levied troops, and their ability, when fairly led, to meet in the open field the flower of the English army and the trained veterans of the Continent. It inspired with new ardor the Commander-in-chief, his officers and men, and it thus became an important link in that chain of events, military and civil, which, by the wisdom of Washington and the help of God, established, after a seven years' struggle, our Union and our Independence. The New York Historical Society, which is faithfully prosecuting the work on which it entered seventy-two years ago, under the presidency of Egbert Benson, whom some of us well remember, of rescuing from forgetfulness and decay the fleet-

ing reminiscences of our historic times, has brought us to-day to this pleasant spot where the fast advancing city has but partially changed the natural features so bold and picturesque which marked it a century ago ; on those Heights the army of Washington was encamped, and here you look upon the field of battle. The occasion is fitly graced by this brilliant assemblage, including our distinguished and welcome guests, and by our gallant Seventh Regiment, of which New York is justly proud—that school of soldiers which in our late war furnished more than six hundred officers to the army and navy of the United States.

When I ventured to accept the duty with which I have been honored, of addressing you on this occasion, I recalled the touching words of Lincoln at Gettysburg, when, alluding to the brave men by whom that great battle had been won, he said, “ The world will little note nor long remember what we say here ; but it can never forget what they did here.” I felt that the sacred memories invoked by the scene would appeal to your imaginations and your hearts with an eloquence of their own, and that you would kindly accept some thoughts suggested by the day and a simple narrative of the battle.

Practical as may be the character, active as is the life of our countrymen, theirs is not the frigid philosophy denounced by the English moralist which might conduct one unmoved over ground consecrated by wisdom, bravery, and virtue. If, as Dr. Johnson observed, that man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not burn brighter amid the ruins of Iona : the American, could he be found, would be still less to be envied, whose patriotism at this Centennial season would not be refreshed on the battle-fields of the Revolution, where our independence was won under the lead of Washington.

If Marathon and Iona inspire touching memories of a dead past, our revolutionary scenes, whilst they also remind us of ages that are gone, are linked with a living present, and an impending and limitless future.

In America, too, each citizen shares the sovereignty of the

people, to whose wisdom and virtue are committed from generation to generation the character and destiny of the Republic ; and this thought enhances the personal interest of each in the past of the country whose great future we are moulding and carving and determining to-day.

It has been said that those will not look forward to posterity who do not look back to their ancestors. We are accustomed as a nation to do the one and the other, and the habit strengthens as we advance. No story was more fascinating to our childhood than that of America—its discovery by Columbus, the adventurous navigators who followed in his steps, its settlement by colonists from every part of Europe with their varied languages, characteristics, and traditions, bringing with them the promise and the power of that magnificent age of European advancement, of which there has recently been given us, with unrivalled skill, so striking a picture.

We trace the rough progress of the colonists in their battles with the wilderness, with the Indians, and with each other, up to the heroic story of our Revolution, which still grows in interest as we read it anew in the thoughtful and brilliant page of Bancroft.

Our interest was attended by the thought that the Republic which had grown from those long processions across the sea, and nearly two centuries of preparation, was, as Burke declared, a new power, which, in its relations to the rest of the world, might be compared to a new planet with its disturbing influences suddenly appearing in the solar system.

The prediction in other lands that the Republic might prove rather an erratic comet that would vanish in space, or a baneful meteor, whose brief splendor would expire in darkness, was thought in Europe likely to be accomplished by the recent convulsion that threatened to terminate our national career. The result of that contest has crowned the accomplishments of our first century with the conviction, that neither foreign power nor internal strife can reach the life of the Republic ; but that it contains within itself moral elements of stability and permanence which were utterly discredited

by other nations, and were but partially appreciated among ourselves.

In this view our Centennial commemoration becomes more than a sentimental expression ; it marks the entering of the Republic upon a new epoch, no longer as a doubtful experiment, but as a fixed fact—a power of continental boundaries, of limitless resources, of unmeasured energy, of schools and churches, and universal freedom, more closely united than ever before on a basis of equal rights and mutual interests, and with no lingering element of sectional discord to again disturb its harmony.

Other anticipations, where the wish was father to the thought, were indulged in across the water by those who hastened to announce our national dissolution, and to hail it as a “ blessing and a boon.” They dreamed that the American Union was broken, that “ the bubble of democracy was burst,” and that it would devolve on the European powers whom we had dismissed from our territories to re-enter them once more, to save the remnants from destruction. France wrote, an officer of the old empire would retake the territory of Orleans ; England might appropriate Oregon, the State of Maine, and the harbor of Portland ; Mexico, under foreign protection, would reclaim New Mexico, Texas, and California ; while an Austrian prince from the throne of the Montezumas would look upon the distribution of the effects of the defunct Republic, and lend his imperial countenance to the system of perpetual slavery that was expected to flourish amid its ruins.

The heart of the nation may well beat high with joy and thankfulness, as our Centennial sees the gathering of the nations at Philadelphia, not to sing our requiem and divide our heritage, but bringing their congratulations and their treasures to lend magnificence to the birth-year of the republic.

Having dismissed to their homes her army of a million, and retained for the protection of the Republic some 25,000 men, less than the garrison of an European capital, she cordially greets in friendly rivalry her welcome guests in a way

to assure them that if "Westward the Star of Empire takes its way," our Star of Empire is the harbinger of peace.

Our Centennial is teaching us the unity of history by the most striking of lessons, as Egypt leads the throng, mother of civilization, with her untold ages of hoar antiquity—the land of the Pharaohs and the Pyramids; of the Nile and of the Sphinx, with scriptural memories of Abram and Sarah, of Joseph and his brethren, when the great pyramid had been standing some 2,000 years; of the second Joseph, the mother and the Child, recalling Memphis and Thebes, Rameses and Cambyeses, with dim thoughts of Tyre and Sidon and Babylon, as shadowed forth by Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Egypt, which in her remote origin was a sphinx to the ancient Greeks, brings from the East with oriental courtesy her greeting and her gifts. She salutes us as of old the statue of Memnon greeted the rising sun; and as we read the message written on her portals at Fairmount, "The oldest people sends her morning greeting to the youngest nation," we feel that our youthful Republic, child of the brightest centuries of European development, is akin to all the nations and heir to the culture of all the ages.

There is one pleasant thought connected with the Centennial,—pleasant in every aspect and in its significance to the world at large, of which we are naturally reminded as we recall the battle here fought between England and America,—the thought that the Revolution which severed our political connection with the British crown, has enlarged our relations and confirmed our friendship with the British people.

Nothing could have so crowned our majestic celebration, ordained by Congress and proclaimed by the President—the nation commemorating its founders and the world assisting at the fête—as the magnanimity, worthy of the Anglo-Saxon race, and which America will not soon forget, with which England deputed her accomplished and honored Envoy at Washington to represent the British Empire at the ceremonies in honor of the birth-year of the Republic.

Wars that are provoked by passion or ambition may produce new storms of international hate, to desolate in turn

successive generations ; but with wars that result from the antagonism of principles and systems, after the lightning and the crash may come the clear sky, while nature smiles with freshened verdure, teaching us that in the Divine Economy it is often the conflict of discordant powers that produces the harmony of the universe.

Touching the dispute between England and her colonies, which Englishmen and Americans can now discuss with calm philosophy, there is one fact creditable alike to both parties and essential to a correct appreciation of the position, which has been curiously ignored, even in recent discussions of the question on both sides the Atlantic. The impression still obtains in various quarters, that for many years previous to the Revolution a desire for independence had been growing in the Colonies, and that when the struggle was entered upon the American leaders aimed at a separation. Jefferson on the contrary declared :

“ It is well known that in July, 1775, a separation from Great Britain and establishment of republican government had never yet entered into any person’s mind.” The accuracy of that statement was in accord with the assurance given by Franklin in August, 1774, to Lord Chatham, that he “ never had heard in any conversation from any person, drunk or sober, the least expression of a wish for separation,” and it was distinctly confirmed by the testimony of John Adams, who added, his sturdy patriotism giving significance to the remark : “ For my own part, there was not a moment during the Revolution when I would not have given everything I possessed, for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had sufficient security for its continuance.” The character of the ties that attached the Colonies to England was too little appreciated at the Court of St. James ; and Lord Russell, in his *Life of Charles James Fox*, remarked that “ it was the peculiar infelicity of George the III. and Lord North, that they turned to gall all those feelings of filial piety which had so long filled the breasts of Americans.”

The principles on which our fathers resisted the powers

assumed by Great Britain, are still occasionally criticised in that country, but it can never be forgotten that the State papers developing their views commanded the approval, even the homage of the great Lord Chatham.

With the impressive diction that marked his transcendent oratory, he said in words that can bear to be repeated, but not to be abridged :

“For myself, I must declare and avow that in all my reading and observation, and it has been my favorite study—I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master states of the world—for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia.”

That Chatham, who as William Pitt had been the great Commoner of England, the expounder of the popular features of the British Constitution, the most powerful orator of modern times, whose “character had astonished a corrupt age,” found the statesmanship of the Continental Congress to surpass that of the master states of ancient and of modern times, is a noteworthy incident, as we review after the lapse of a century, the full development of that political capacity whose early exhibition at Philadelphia called forth that generous tribute from the foremost statesman of Great Britain.

Turning a deaf ear to the advice and warnings of Chatham and of Burke, who stood on the American question like “guide-posts and land-marks in the state,” the ministry adhered to the principle of the act, which said—what an historic lesson it teaches to-day—“It is expedient to raise a revenue in America.”

On the soundness of that proposition the ministry deliberately staked the dignity of the Crown and the integrity of the Kingdom.

Dr. Johnson, in his “Taxation no Tyranny,” ignoring the principles and the characteristics of the American Colonists, and the fact that their ancestors in every country of Europe had been accustomed to resist oppression, anticipated as the result of the struggle, “English superiority and American

obedience," nor dreamed that he was assisting in the dismemberment of the British Empire and the erection of an American Republic.

Never was a ministry trifling with the interests and honor of a great nation more frankly and fearlessly warned, and the speeches of Chatham on the American question show the difference between the true statesman, maintaining the truth with outspoken independence against an obstinate king, a convenient ministry, and a subservient parliament; and supple courtiers who bend the knee where thrift may follow fawning, and sustain with unquestioning acquiescence governmental policies that assail the morality and the dignity of the nation.

"My Lords," said Chatham, and his words may be repeated from age to age in every country, "this ruinous and ignominious situation, where we cannot act with success nor suffer with honor, calls upon us to remonstrate in the strongest language, to rescue the ear of majesty from the delusions which surround it."

When, after the rejection of their second petition, Congress resolved upon the necessity of separation, and declared the inalienable rights which formed the basis of its action, the great truths which it announced, if thought strange and novel in Europe, had little of novelty in America. They were here regarded not as something newly discovered, but old as the creation, written in the Bible, uttered by others than Christian philosophers from Aristotle to Locke,—truths which had descended from their ancestors among the Hollanders, the Walloons, the French Huguenots, the English, the Irish and the Scotch, the Swedes, the Germans, and the Swiss, the Bohemian Protestants, the Italian Waldenses, the Salzburg exiles, the Moravian Brothers, and refugees from the Palatinate, Alsace, and Southern Germany.

They were rights that had been asserted and battled for in England by those who believed in the enjoyment of personal and religious freedom: which had animated the great charter wrested from John: which had inspired the Petition of Right: which had been reduced to practice in the English Revolution: which were the proper heritage of the colonists from their

earnest, freedom-loving, stout-hearted sires : truths self-evident, " the unassuming commonplace of nature."

When at our centennial commemoration of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia, ordained by Congress to be held under the auspices of the Government, and assisted in by the Powers invited by the President, with the illustrious Emperor of Brazil and a royal prince of Sweden, presenting a scene unique in its political significance and its historic associations, our acting Vice-President, Mr. Ferry, remarking that the regretful absence of the President had cast upon him the honor of presiding on that eventful occasion, said that the heroic statesmen who had there chosen between royal rule and popular sovereignty had been inspired, in their declaration that all men are born free and equal, by the truth uttered on Mars Hill that God hath made of one blood all nations of men. The religious sentiment thus alluded to by the Vice-President has been recognized by the most philosophic writers in America, as having lain at the root of the governmental theories as well as of the social characteristics of the colonists. Burke, in the greatest of his speeches on America—that on conciliation—referred to the stream of foreigners which had flowed into the colonies as being for the greatest part composed of dissenters from the establishments of their respective countries; and soon after that speech, and a week before Congress was driven from Philadelphia, that body ordered an importation of twenty thousand Bibles for its constituents, at the public expense.

An interesting example of the recognition of the divine rights of people, by the government of Holland, the parent state of this part of our country, and of whom we are reminded by these Harlem plains, is found in the reply of the States General to the request of Great Britain for troops to assist in the subjugation of the rebellious Americans.

It was in December, 1775, that DERK VAN DER CAPPEL—may his name be cherished—declared, in answer to the British demand for troops, that " the Americans were worthy of every man's esteem—a brave people, defending in a manly and religious manner those rights which, as men, they

derive from God, and not from the Legislature of Great Britain."

It was the fine thought of Bryant in his Ode to Freedom—

Thy birthright was not given by human hands ;
Thou wert twin-born with man.

But we may not linger on the civil questions involved in our Declaration which have already been treated in our recent centennial orations with so much of learning, eloquence, and deep philosophy, by statesmen, jurists, diplomatists, and divines.

The military question to which this battle scene recalls us was, in fact, the question on which our success in the war immediately depended ; for that success hung not alone on the soundness of our political theories, but on our ability to defeat the armies and fleets of Great Britain, then in the height of her pride and the most powerful government in the world.

We began the struggle with no certainty of any foreign aid, and so unequal seemed the contest that Vergennes, the Minister of Louis XVI., assured our envoys that it would not be safe for France and America together to attempt to match England, unless they were assisted by other powers. This inequality must be remembered if we would appreciate aright the importance of the battle fought on this spot an hundred years ago. The Declaration of Independence but just adopted, closing the door to conciliation and compromise, had alienated our friends in England. France had not yet become our ally. There had not yet come to us the gallant and generous Lafayette, of whom Washington wrote: "Treat him as though he were my own son." We had not yet welcomed to our camp and to our hearts Kosciusko, whose soldierly fame lives alike in Europe and America ; nor Steuben, who had learned the art of war under the great Frederick ; nor De Kalb, who had served with the French and who fell at Camden with eleven wounds ; nor Rochambeau, with his brave command of six thousand men, who was made Marshal of France for his services at Yorktown, and who

brought in his gallant train such men as D'Estaing, Du Portail, De Choisé, Deuxponts, Custine, De Noailles, Montmorenci, De Grasse, Lauzun, St. Simon, De Broglie, Berthier, Ségur, and Montesquieu.

The 1st of January, 1776, opened gloomily, with the defeat at Quebec and the death of the brave Montgomery. In March, the British had evacuated Boston. In April, Washington had arrived in New York. On the 2d of July, Congress had resolved on separation, and on the 9th the New York Convention at White Plains had given, as Sparks happily said, the finishing stroke to the Declaration of Independence, which that evening was read at the head of each brigade of the army, and the same night the leaden statue of George III. in the Bowling Green was broken up and run into bullets. Presently arrived in the Hudson two British ships, and a third with the Admiral's flag of Lord Howe. Soon the Highlanders, Hessians and other troops began to be landed at Staten Island. The British force near New York amounted to 30,000 men. That of the Americans was less than 20,000, imperfectly equipped and armed, composed in part of "hasty levies of countrymen." The yeomen summoned from the plough, and destitute of arms, were ordered to bring with them a shovel, spade, or pickaxe, or a scythe straightened and fastened to a pole.

On the 27th of August was fought the disastrous battle of Long Island. Two nights afterwards, on the 29th, was effected the masterly retreat of Washington from Brooklyn to New York, one of the most signal achievements of the war, and perhaps unsurpassed in military history, by which "9,000 men with their munitions of war, were successfully withdrawn from before a victorious enemy, encamped so near that every stroke of spade and pickaxe from their trenches could be heard."

On the 2d of September, Washington wrote to Congress that the situation was truly distressing; that the check on the 27th had filled the troops with apprehension and despair; that they were dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return; and that great numbers had gone off, "in some instances almost

by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time."

A council of general officers had decided with regret that it would be necessary to evacuate New York, which Washington said had become the grand magazine of America. Putnam was stationed in the city with only 5,000 men, while General Heath with 9,000 men was to guard the upper part of the island and oppose any attempt of the enemy to land. On the 13th of September three frigates and a British man-of-war sailed up the East river towards Hell-gate, firing as they passed. On Saturday, the 14th, Washington's baggage was removed to his new headquarters at Kingsbridge. It was now clear that the enemy were preparing to encompass our army on the island, and their landing at Harlem or Morrisania was apprehended. But the evening passed quietly, excepting that six more ships had moved up the East River.

On the morning of Sunday, the 15th of September, three British ships of war were sent up the North River with "a most tremendous firing," as far as Bloomingdale, with the intention, as appears from Sir William Howe's report, of drawing the attention of the Americans in that direction. At 11 o'clock the real business of the day commenced by a cannonade from three frigates and two forty-gun ships, which were drawn up in line in the East River, upon the American breastworks near Kip's Bay. Under cover of this fire was landed the first division of the British army, consisting of the Light Infantry, the British Reserve, the Hessian Grenadiers and Chasseurs, under the command of Lt.-Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, who had with him Lt.-General Cornwallis, Major-General Vaughan, Brigadier-General Leslie, and Col. Donop. "The fire of the shipping," wrote Sir Wm. Howe to Lord Germaine, "being so well directed and so incessant, the enemy could not remain in their works, and the descent was made without the least opposition."

This statement is not without interest as tending to explain the panic which seized the militia by whom the works were manned, and who had already been disheartened by the defeat at Brooklyn, and perhaps also that of the two brigades

who had been sent to support them, and who fled at the appearance of some sixty or seventy of the British troops. Washington, who had come galloping down at the first sound of the cannonade, met them in their flight, and strove in vain to rally them. He is said to have been passionately moved by their cowardice, which he reported to Congress and denounced by general order. Recovering his self-possession, he despatched an order for the instant occupation of Harlem Heights, and another for the immediate retreat of Putnam.

There is one incident connected with Putnam's retreat which, although often related, cannot properly be omitted in a centennial mention of that eventful day.

Sir Wm. Howe, in his letter of September 21st, to Lord George Germaine, after describing the landing at Kip's Bay, said : " The British immediately took post on the commanding height of Inclenberg ; " but Sir William omitted to advise his Lordship of the disposition of his staff on their arrival at that point, to which the American officers were accustomed to attribute the safety of Gen. Putnam's command, the loss of which at that stage of the war might have had a serious influence on the military situation.

On " the commanding height of Inclenberg," now known more modestly as Murray Hill, resided Robert Murray whose wife Mary Lindley Murray—all honor to her memory—in the absence of her husband invited Sir William and his officers, as they approached her residence, to stop for lunch. A halt was ordered and the invitation accepted. The unaccustomed heat and their morning's work seem to have prepared the commander-in-chief and his officers, who were accompanied by his Excellency Gov. Tryon, to enjoy the proffered rest and repast. In cheerful mood after their successful landing, and refreshed with the generous wine, they bantered their hostess with British bluntness on her rebel sympathies, and Mrs. Murray responded with such graceful tact and pleasant humor, that two hours or more were whiled away before they had concluded their regale. During that precious time, Putnam and his command, in their straggling and disorderly retreat along the Bloomingdale road, had passed in safety

within a mile of the comfortable parlors where the illustrious generals, who were to conquer America, quaffed with appreciation the old Madeira, jested complacently at the discomfiture of the rebels, and unconsciously measured the military prudence of the Royal staff with the patriotic wit of an American woman. One mile's march during that pleasant lunch would have cut off Putnam's advance or cut it in two, and a little later, when he had passed, the 42d Highlanders moved towards Bloomingdale "to intercept the retreating Americans."

Putnam's command, after a weary march, joined the army in the evening on Harlem Heights, where Washington had made his headquarters at the house of Colonel Roger Morris, at that time an adherent of Royal cause, formerly his companion in Braddock's campaign, and his successful competitor for the hand of Mary Philipse. This house, overlooking the Harlem River, and commanding an extensive and varied view, is now known as the Jumel Place, and here in later years resided for a time Col. Aaron Burr, after his marriage with Madame, the widow Jumel. About a mile to the north was the height of Mount Washington crowned with an earthwork mounting thirty cannon. On the heights, at this period, commenced the intercourse of Washington with Alexander Hamilton, a young captain of artillery, whose skill in the construction of some of the defences had attracted the attention of the commander-in-chief, and whose splendid abilities as exhibited in the work of the National Constitution and the restoration of the national credit were soon to command the attention of the world.

The headquarters of the British Commander General, Sir William Howe, were at the house of Mr. Apthorpe, which stands near the corner of Ninth avenue and Ninety-first street, and is now known as Elm Park. The encampment of the British extended from the East River, where General Howe's right rested on Horen's Hook near Eighty-ninth street, to the North River where his left was at Bloomingdale, the distance being about two miles and both flanks being covered by his

ships. The encampment extended from the fourth to the eighth mile-stone.

On the heights occupied by the Americans, between the ninth and tenth mile-stones, southwest of the Roger Morris House, our troops were preparing to form the lines afterwards completed between the Hudson River on the west and the Harlem river on the east, over a broken surface with breast-works, entrenchments and *abatis*.

Here it was intended "to make a grand stand." Both sides of the King's Bridge were carefully fortified, making this the strongest point. The division of the army lying near the Roger Morris House extended southwardly to near the Hollow Way running from Harlem Plain to the Hudson River at the site of the present Manhattanville, a natural break between the Harlem and the Bloomingdale Heights. Between the Point of Rocks (the southern extremity of the Harlem Heights, now being cut away, the property of the Convent of Sacred Heart), and McGowan's Pass at the northern extremity of the Central Park, and lying on the eastward of Bloomingdale Heights, intervened a low ground known as the Harlem Plain. The Point of Rocks at One Hundred and Twenty-seventh street was the advance post of the American army, and on the hill slope below McGowan's Pass, at One Hundred and Ninth street, a mile and a half distant was the advance post of the British army. The picket lines of each army extended beyond these points into the plains and along the ridge which overlooked them. As night closed around the two armies on the opposing heights, a cold driving rain succeeded to the sultry heat of the morning, and the contrast between the thorough equipment of the British troops and the half-clad unsheltered condition of the Americans, without tents or blankets, might have extended perhaps to the temper of the two armies. The events of the day had tended to confirm the impression made by the battle of Long Island ; to increase the belief of the British in their resistless superiority, and to lower the confidence of the Americans in their officers and in themselves.

In reporting to their respective governments upon the con-

duct of their troops at Kip's Bay on this memorable Sunday, Sir William Howe gave praise for highly meritorious conduct to his officers and men, while Washington expressed to Congress his great surprise and mortification at the dastardly behavior of his troops, whose cowardice was said to have wrung from him the exclamation, "Are these the men with whom I am to defend America?"

Whilst Washington in general orders denounced instant death as the punishment of cowardice in the field, he devoted himself to the task of raising the courage of the army. He perfectly understood that dependence upon raw militia was resting upon a broken staff. "Men," he wrote to the President of Congress, "just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill (which is followed by want of confidence in themselves when opposed to troops regularly trained and appointed, superior in knowledge and superior in arms), are timid and ready to fly from their own shadows." He had formed the determination, for which his present strong position afforded an excellent opportunity, "to habituate his soldiers by a series of successful skirmishes to meet the enemy in the field." With clear sagacity, as observed by Marshall, he had persuaded himself that his detachments, knowing that a strongly entrenched camp was immediately in their rear, would soon display their native courage and speedily regain the confidence they had lost.

On the morning of Monday the 16th of September, Washington concluded a letter to Congress on the affair at Kip's Bay, with the remark, "I have sent out some reconnoitring parties to gain intelligence, if possible, of the disposition of the enemy." From the contemporaneous authority of an officer engaged in the affair, it appears that a scouting party of the Regiment of Rangers, a body of picked men under the command of Lieut. Colonel Thomas Knowlton, set out before day-break with instructions to ascertain the position of the enemy's advanced guard. Passing over the ridge which we have described as the Bloomingdale Heights, then known as the Vanderwater Heights (they are so described in

Sir William Howe's despatch), they pushed through the woods until, near the southern extremity of this ridge, they came at day-break upon a large party of the British light infantry, who rapidly advanced upon them. A sharp skirmish ensued, until Knowlton, perceiving that with their superior numbers they were turning his flank, ordered a retreat. His men fell back in an orderly manner to the northernmost end of the ridge, where close by our advance posts a second stand was made. Meanwhile, the firing had attracted attention, and soon after Washington's morning despatches were sent to Congress, rumors reached the headquarters of a movement by the enemy, considerable bodies of whom were showing themselves at the lower end of the plains.

Adjutant-General Joseph Reed, as he himself informs us, was sent to the front to learn the truth, and went down to the most advanced guard picketed on the plain below the Point of Rocks. He here fell in with the party of Knowlton, who had been driven from the hill, and while Reed was talking to the officer in command the enemy showed themselves and opened fire at a distance of fifty yards. The Americans behaved well, stood and returned the fire till overpowered by numbers (ten to one is Reed's estimate), they retreated, the enemy advancing with such rapidity that they were in possession of the house in which Reed conversed with the officer five minutes after he left it.

Reed encouraged by the behavior of the men started for headquarters to make his report and ask for reinforcements. Meanwhile Washington had mounted his horse and ridden down to our advanced posts. Hardly had Reed reached him when the light infantry showed themselves in view, and in the most contemptuous manner sounded their bugles as is usual after a fox chase. This insulting behavior brought a blush to the cheeks of the officers, and caused their blood to tingle with shame. It showed them the contempt in which they were held by their adversaries and seemed to crown their disgrace.

On reconnoitring the situation of the enemy, Washington saw that there was an opportunity for a successful action in

which, under favorable conditions, the morale of the army could be restored, and, to use his own words, he formed the design of "cutting off such of the enemy's troops as might advance to the extremity of the woods." This wood was on the northernmost spur of the Bloomingdale Heights, which overlooked the hollow way and was divided from a similar spur opposite at the Point of Rocks by a gully or ravine at the foot of which lay a round meadow known in the topography of the day as Matje (or Mutje) Davits Fly.

Washington learning that the body of the enemy who kept themselves concealed was about three hundred, ordered three companies of Colonel Weedon's regiment from Virginia, under the command of Major Andrew Leitch, and Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton with his Rangers, to try and get in their rear, while a disposition was made as if to attack them in front and to draw their attention that way. Knowlton who was familiar with the ground seems to have guided his party by the left flank of the enemy through the woods of the western slopes of the Bloomingdale Ridge in which he had fought in the morning, in order to fall upon their rear. Leitch with his Virginians, unacquainted with the field, was put under the guidance of Adjutant-General Reed. It is worth while here to notice that the Virginia troop, which was this day under Leitch, had only arrived the day preceding, having been ordered from the command of General Mercer in New Jersey, and had joined the camp by way of Burdett's Ferry, facing Fort Washington. Meanwhile at ten o'clock a demonstration or feint was made on the front which had the effect intended by Washington. The British troops immediately ran down the hill to the round meadow at its foot. Here, in the words of General Clinton, who was in the action during the greater part of the day, and whose report to the New York Convention is the most detailed and intelligible account of it, they were opposed with spirit and soon made to retreat to a clear field about two hundred paces (eight hundred feet distant), south-east of the fly or meadow, where they lodged themselves behind a fence covered with bushes. This cleared field we take to have been to the east and some-

what south of the point of the ridge facing the Point of Rocks. A smart firing began but at too great a distance to do much execution, when a couple of field pieces being brought to bear upon the British, at the second discharge they again fell back retreating up the eastern slope of the hill. At this moment Major Leitch and his command came upon the field, but misled by the movements of the regiment in action, who seem to have hailed them as they appeared on the plain, were diverted from the path by which Reed intended to lead them around the right flank of the British to their rear, where he hoped to make a junction with Knowlton's Rangers. Leitch's command evidently came from the lines by the Kings Bridge road and their course was to have been by an irregular road, which leaving it crossed the plain, ran along the eastern slope of the ridge and passed over it about 112th street, where the line of trees now standing marks its course, connecting with the Bloomingdale road at its intersection with the present Eleventh avenue. Reed finding it impossible to check their ardor accompanied them. They joined the regiment in action; the feint was now turned into an attack. In a few minutes, in the words of Reed, our brave fellows mounted up the rocks, attacked the enemy, and a brisk action ensued. Major Leitch fell presently, after the close fighting began, wounded with three balls. In a buckwheat field on the top of the hill, which General Clinton describes as four hundred paces—sixteen hundred feet distant—(and here we must remark that there can be no doubt about the accuracy of these distances, Clinton himself having surveyed the ground a few years previously to settle the Harlem boundary), the British troops met the 42d Highlanders, who, dispatched at eleven o'clock, had moved up on a double trot without stopping to draw breath, to the support of the Light Infantry, whose distance from their lines had caused general alarm at Howe's headquarters.

The effect of the undue and unexpected precipitation on the part of the American troops ordered to make the feint, was to cause the attack to be made too soon, and rather in flank than in the rear, thus thwarting the well-arranged plans of

Washington. The interference with his orders was pointedly referred to in the General Orders of the next day, in the remark that "the loss of the enemy yesterday would undoubtedly have been much greater if the orders of the Commander-in-Chief had not in some instance been contradicted by some inferior officers, who, however well they might mean, ought not to presume to direct." At the same time, the Virginians of Leitch's command received the thanks of Washington for their gallantry.

On receiving their reinforcements, the British made their second stand. Here it is probable that Knowlton made his appearance on the British left flank. In the buckwheat field which is located to the eastward of the Bloomingdale Asylum on the line of 118th street, a brisk action commenced, which continued near two hours. In this fight, in which, in the words of General Heath, there was good "marksmanship on both sides," Colonel Knowlton fell about noon. The officer of the Rangers, whose account of the early morning skirmish we have freely quoted, caught him in his arms, and sent him off the field by two of his men, and he was taken to our lines on the horse of Adjutant-General Reed, probably by the road we have described, which in fact is the only road laid down on the maps of the period, and the only path practicable for a horse.

Knowlton behaved with the greatest courage, and accepted his fate with brave composure. "He seemed," wrote one of his officers, "as unconcerned as though nothing had happened to him." His last inquiry was as to the result of the action. Notwithstanding the loss of their leaders, the men persevered and continued the engagement under the lead of the captains, until Washington, finding that they needed support, advanced part of Colonel Griffiths' and Colonel Richardson's Maryland regiments, with some detachments from the eastern regiments who were nearest the scene of action, who charged the enemy with great intrepidity. Among these troops were Captain Beatty of the Maryland line, Major Mantz with three rifle companies of the same troops, Major Price with three of the Independent companies of Maryland troops, and three

other companies of the Maryland Flying Cavalry, a battalion of Virginians, and some southern troops. Thus reinforced, the Americans pushed on with fresh vigor. Generals Putnam and Greene, with Tilghman and other officers of Washington's staff, joined in the engagement, and animated the soldiers by their presence. Greene, in his account of the battle, speaks of the noble behavior of Putnam and Adjutant-General Reed. The British also received a considerable addition to their force, which appears from the official report of Lord Howe to have consisted of "the reserve with two field pieces, a battalion of Hessian grenadiers, and a company of chasseurs," under the command of Brigadier-General Leslie. Notwithstanding this assistance they were driven from the buckwheat field into a neighboring orchard. This orchard was a field north of the line of 116th street, where the remains of the old trees were visible until about the year 1866, when the land was cleared. An ineffectual attempt was made by the British for a further stand, but they were again driven across a hollow and up a hill not far distant from their own encampment. This hollow was undoubtedly the dip of land between the Bloomingdale and McGowan's Heights, and the hill the slope of the latter elevation.

Here the Americans having silenced the British fire in great measure, Washington judged it prudent to order a retreat, fearing that the enemy, as he afterwards learned was really the case, were sending a large body to support their party, which would have involved his drawing supports from his strong position on the Harlem Heights, and have brought on a general engagement, which he was determined to avoid. The war, as he had written Congress, must be a "war of posts," and he had no thought of jeopardizing the cause by a battle in the open field—at least, not till he had thoroughly tried the temper of his troops. The Von Lansing battalion was seen to draw near; two other German battalions, under Von Donop, occupied M'Gowan's Pass; and from eight to ten thousand men were under arms, hidden by the hill to which the enemy were being driven. The American troops obeyed the re-call ordered by Washington, although the

"pursuit of a flying enemy was so new a scene that it was with difficulty our men could be brought to retreat, which was, however, effected in very good order."

The loss on the side of the Americans, as reported by General George Clinton, was seventeen dead and fifty-three wounded. On the part of the British, according to the full circumstantial report of Bauermeister, quoted by Mr. Bancroft, there were seventy dead and two hundred and ten wounded.

The battle, as we have described it, was chiefly fought upon the Bloomingdale Heights; but as the main action commenced on the plains near Manhattanville, it was called by Mr. Lossing the battle of Harlem Plains, and that title has been adopted in the subsequent narratives of Mr. Dawson and other writers. Some manuscript accounts of the battle not hitherto referred to have thrown light upon points which seemed a little doubtful; and in this connection I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to Mr. Stevens, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Kelby, of our New York Historical Society, for their kind assistance.

The general and deep satisfaction at the events of the day was dimmed by the sorrow for those who had fallen or who were suffering from their wounds.

The movements of the British left it doubtful what they might intend, and Washington's order for the night of the 16th indicated careful preparation to meet a possible attack along the whole line of heights, commanding the hollow way from the North River to the main road leading from New York to Kingsbridge. The parole was BEALE, and the countersign, MARYLAND. Gen. Clinton was to form next the North River, then Gen. Scott's brigade and Lieut. Col. Sayres, of Col. Griffiths' regiment, with the three companies intended for a re-enforcement in the morning.

Gen. Nixon's and Col. Sergeant's division, Col. Weedon and Maj. Price's regiments, were ordered to retire to their quarter and refresh themselves, but to hold themselves in readiness to turn out at a minute's warning. Gen. McDougal was to establish guards against his brigade upon the heights from

Morris's house to McDougall's camp, to furnish proper guards to prevent surprise, not less than twenty men from each regiment. Gen. Putnam was placed in command upon the right flank for the night, and Gen. Spencer from McDougall's brigade to Morris's house ; and should the enemy attempt to pass during the night, Gen. Putnam was to apply to Gen. Spencer for a re-enforcement.

The next day, by general order, Washington returned his most hearty thanks to "the troops commanded yesterday by Major Leitch, who *first* advanced upon the enemy, and the others who so resolutely supported them." He contrasted their behavior with that of some troops the day before, as showing what might be done when officers and men exert themselves. Again he called upon them to act up to the noble cause in which they were engaged, and to support the honor and liberties of their country. In naming the officer who was to take command of the party lately led by Col. Knowlton, he declared that the gallant officer who had yesterday fallen while gloriously fighting would have done honor to any country. The order concluded with a rebuke to the inferior officers, whose ill-advised attention to unauthorized orders had interfered with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and diminished their success.

The name of LEITCH was given by Washington for the next day's parole—a grateful tribute to the wounded officer, who lingered till the 1st of October, and for the countersign, with similar significance, was given "*Virginia*."

Col. Knowlton—whose grandson we cordially welcome on this occasion—was the favorite officer of Gen. Putnam. He had distinguished himself, with Prescott, in fortifying Bunker Hill and in holding the British at bay ; in Trumbull's historic painting he stands almost alone, "the hero of the rail fence," without coat or hat, grasping his bayonetless musket. He became the trusted officer of Washington, and was deputed by the Commander-in-Chief to head a difficult night expedition to Charlestown, which he managed with entire success. He was buried by order of Washington within the lines, and Leitch was presently buried by his side ; what fitter

time than this, our Centennial anniversary, could a grateful people select for the erection of a monument to their memory?

The result of the engagement which, commencing as a skirmish of outposts, had assumed at its close such large dimensions that from four to five thousand troops were estimated to be engaged on either side, had signally accomplished the design of Washington to recover the military ardor of his troops. It was, as Irving remarks in his *Life of Washington*, "The first gleam of success in the campaign." The importance attributed to it by Washington appears from the accounts written by him to the President of Congress; to the Convention of New York; to Gov. Henry, Gov. Trumbull, Gen. Schuyler, and his brothers Lund and John Augustine. To Gen. Schuyler he said, "Our men behaved with great bravery, and being supported by fresh troops, beat the enemy fairly from the field."

General Greene, who at a later day, wrote of this his first close fight, "I fought hard at Harlem," said, on the 4th October, in a detailed account of the action: "Had all the Colonies good officers there is no danger of the Troops; never were troops that would stand in the field longer than the American soldiery. If the officers were as good as the men, and had only a few months to form the troops by discipline, America might bid defiance to the whole world."

Gen. George Clinton concluded his narrative of the battle to the New York Convention, with the remark: "I consider our success in this small affair at this time almost equal to a victory. It has animated our troops, given them new spirits, and erased every bad impression the retreat from Long Island, etc., had left on their minds. They find they are able with inferior numbers to drive the enemy—and think of nothing now but conquest."

This success following immediately the unfortunate affair of Kip's Bay—in which, as was remarked by Heath, the officers at least knew that the city was to be abandoned,—warranted the opinion which Greene, who soon became the first military authority in America, expressed of those stay-

ing qualities of the American soldier, which in our day have been recognized by high authorities in Great Britain.

The late distinguished Col. Charles Chesney, of the Royal Engineers, in a review of the interesting History of our Civil War by the Comte de Paris, referred to Malvern Hill as illustrating "the truth which the world is slowly realizing, that the American soldier is most formidable when apparently defeated, and least subject to panic when retreating before a victorious enemy."

The bugle blast of the morning that had seemed to Reed to liken the contest to a fox chase, had called forth a spirit and a policy which resulted in a double lesson of confidence to the Americans and of caution to the British. "They have ever since," wrote George Clinton on the 21st of September, "been exceedingly modest and quiet, not having even patrolling parties beyond their lines." The British for a time showed no desire to bring on the general engagement the American officers had believed to be impending, and which Washington had been anxious to avoid on the policy recommended by our friends in Europe, and which accorded with his own conviction. So late as the 2d of October an American party of four thousand men gathered in without molestation the hay and corn in the Harlem Plains which each army had been watching and claiming as its own.

The British order for the 17th, the day after the battle, while expressing the highest opinion of the bravery of the troops, who it remarked had yesterday beaten back a very superior body of the rebels, and returning thanks to the battalion, and the officers and men of the artillery that came to their support, expressed the disapproval by the Commander-in-Chief of the light company in pursuing the rebels without discretion, without support.

No similar imprudence was committed on the part of the light infantry during the period of nearly four weeks that the two armies remained encamped at Harlem. A brief mention of the engagement is found in the Historic Record of the Forty-second Highlanders, with the remark, "This being

only an affair of outposts, no detailed account of it was given, but it was a well contested action."

Stedman's History of the American War, says, that "the action was carried on by reinforcements on both sides and became very warm." It assumed that the Americans possessed a great advantage from the circumstance of engaging within half a mile of their entrenched camp, where they could be supplied with fresh troops as often as the occasion required, and that victory nevertheless was on the part of the English, with a loss to the rebels of three hundred. For the true opinion of the affair entertained by Sir Henry Clinton, we are indebted to his own copy of Stedman's History, in which he had written on the margin of the passage pronouncing it a victory, "The ungovernable impetuosity of the light troops drew us into this scrape."

In recalling after the lapse of a century the battle of Harlem Plains, and remembering the subsequent events of the war, we see how completely those events confirm his judgment of the importance of that day in restoring to the American army confidence and self-respect, in compelling the soldierly regard of their brave opponents, and in inducing on the part of the British commander that caution and dilatory policy which accorded with our plans and contributed to our success. Excellent as was the material of the English army, Washington's hasty levies were composed of men in no whit inferior, save in training, discipline, and equipment, for which time and opportunity were essential.

It is true that the army of Sir William Howe, which was pronounced by Lord Chatham "the best appointed army that ever took the field," was composed of English and Scotch regiments, whose pluck and endurance have commanded the admiration of the world from generation to generation, as exhibited in Spain, at Waterloo, in India, and the Crimea. It is true that the Hessian regiments represented the hardy and warlike characteristics of its ancestral tribe, which, as Bancroft tells us, the Romans could never vanquish; a nation of soldiers whose valor had been proven on the battle-fields of Europe, engaged in a former century by Venice against the Turks, and who had taken part in the siege of Athens.

But the army of Washington came of stock equally accustomed to war and hardship, and they soon commanded respect no less for their courage than for their moral traits. Gen. Conway, a distinguished French officer, said to Dr. Rush, that the people of no other nation were so quickly transformed into soldiers as those of the United States. "Those men," said Lord Chatham, in December, 1777, after the surrender of Burgoyne,—“those men whom you called cowards, poltroons, runaways, and knaves, are become victorious over your veteran troops, and in the midst of victory and the flush of conquest have set ministers an example of moderation and magnanimity well worthy of imitation.”

In the American ranks were the descendants of Hollanders and Walloons, who, in the Netherlands, had fought under the Prince of Orange against Philip of Spain and the Duke of Alva ; of Frenchmen who had served under Coligni and Henry of Navarre, whose kinsmen had fallen in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's eve, or had passed through the siege of La Rochelle, waiting in vain for the assistance promised by Elizabeth and never brought by the Earl of Leicester. There were the descendants of those who had fought for Denmark against Tilly and Wallenstein, following the banner of the great Gustavus ; of the stout Englishmen who had battled for the Parliamentarians at Naseby, and who had brought the King to the block at Whitehall ; of the Swiss who with pikes in their hands, and stirred by the horns of Uri and Unterwalden, had defended the freedom of the Cantons in the defiles of the Alps against the trained soldiers of Austria ; of the sturdy Burgers who had maintained against the Duke of Burgundy the liberties of Ghent and Liege ; of the heroes of different nationality but similar vigor who fought under Sobieski and saved Vienna from the Turks ; who stood with William of Orange or with the partisans of James at the Battle of the Boyne, which placed on firmer foundation the unity, strength, and freedom of Great Britain ; with the Dutch at La Hogue, or with that adventurous warrior, Charles the XII. of Sweden, against his victorious rival, Peter the Great of Russia. It might have been said of Washington's army as

was well said by the poet of the Centennial of the American people

“In one strong race all races here unite.”

It is, perhaps, natural that the philosophic results of such a mingling of the best blood of Europe in the American colonies should have been less appreciated in sections that were settled by a single race than in New York, whose cosmopolitan character recalls the fact that as early as 1643 eighteen languages were spoken in the New Netherlands.

Most happily for our land, the colonies were gradually united under the common law and the free institutions of England, and their Teutonic, Celtic, and Latin accents were exchanged for the tongue of Shakespeare and of Milton. But the varied elements of nationality cannot for that reason be forgotten by the student if he would read aright American history and trace to its sources American character. How, for instance, could he ignore the fact that the New Netherlands, under the influence of the Dutch and Huguenots, became a home for those seeking freedom of conscience on this continent, as Holland had been the refuge of the oppressed of Europe, and that the religious toleration of which the New Netherlands set the example was not fully enjoyed in New England till William of Orange, in whose veins was blended the blood of Maurice and of Coligni, ended by his veto the Massachusetts acts touching witchcraft, heresy, and blasphemy.

It has been remarked of the study of history, and with reference to its unity, that the entire succession of men throughout the world should be regarded as one man always living and incessantly learning; in this view to how wide a field of education, and through what ages of training in the varied schools of Europe, may be traced the course of American culture.

There is another interesting thought suggested by the progress of light which has been developed in England by Mr. Froude, and in France by M. Flammarion; that to distant observers the events of years and ages that are gone may seem to be passing at the present moment. The light of

Sirius, for instance, takes nine years to reach us. "Could the inhabitants of Sirius," says Mr. Froude, in 1864, "see the earth at this moment they would see the English army in the trenches before Sebastopol and Florence Nightingdale watching at Scutari over the wounded of Inkermann;" and Flammarion suggests that an inhabitant of the earth instantaneously transported to Capella in 1872, and looking upon the stream of light reflected from our planet, could witness the bloody field of Waterloo.

On a like hypothesis the unknown dwellers at further points might see passing before their eyes the battle which we commemorate to-day, while yet more distant observers receding into space might follow the historic panorama of our planet through all the ages, not as a thing of the past but as in actual progress before their eyes.

Misty as may be to us the more distant periods seen through the cloudy medium of imperfect annals, we may still trace the transatlantic sources of our varied civilization, which, as developed in this Western Continent in our hundredth birth year, make the American traveller, as he sets foot in parts of Europe, feel, as Ticknor said when he crossed the Pyrenees, "as if he had gone back two centuries in time."

Whilst our progress has been respectable in the great elements of civilization, sundry changes have been introduced into the theory and practice of our institutions since the days of Washington, for which Washington and his associates should not be held responsible. Among these changes are the extension of the suffrage, especially in municipal affairs, with a total abandonment of the checks and guards provided by the wisdom of our fathers: and the substitution of popular election for gubernatorial or legislative appointment in the choice of those officials upon the excellence and purity of whose management depend the comfort, the good order, and the exact economy of our cities.

Among the gravest questions presented by our centennial is the question how far those changes have tended to raise or to debase our moral standard; how far it has diminished or

increased waste, mismanagement, and speculation ; how far they have lightened or augmented to rich and poor the burthens of taxation. Upon these points we look for light and a practical solution from the able State Commission headed by Mr. Evarts.

Another radical change in the practical working of our popular institutions is exhibited in our existing machinery by means of caucuses, conventions, and committees for the regulation of the State and National elections ; a scheme outside of the Constitution, and, as regards the choice of President, at variance with its intent, unsanctioned by law, and yet immediately affecting and deciding the elections provided for by law. It may deserve consideration how far this scheme, whatever its advantages, tends to facilitate the people in choosing candidates with the traits they require, or whether it tends to transfer the choice from the people to the managers, who might sometimes have views or interests adverse to those of the electors at large.

Our safety and welfare depend upon the intelligent and patriotic exercise by the people of the sovereign power. France has taught us that a *plebiscite* may be invoked to sustain imperialism ; and from Europe comes the suggestion that with all our democratic forms we know something of the despotism of oligarchies ; and that despite the boasted virtue and cleverness of our people, they are more exposed than Europeans themselves to official imbecility and corruption.

The example of Washington, whether at the head of the army or in the chair of State, stands alone in history, and there is scarcely an event in our annals in which that stately figure is conspicuous, from which we may not learn a lesson.

Should the opening century have in store for you as the sovereigns of the land, trials or difficulties like those which Washington encountered at Kip's Bay ; should you chance upon emergencies calling for the highest courage and devotion to protect the honor of the country, and should you, finding cowardice and treachery where you looked for bravery and truth, be moved to exclaim, " Are these the men with whom

we are to defend America?" learn from the action of the Father of his Country, as he rode down those heights and looked upon those plains, how to inspire with courage your demoralized forces, and to wrest victory from defeat.

Show no tenderness to those who betray their posts; tolerate no policy of silence, concealment, or condonement of acts derogatory to the national fame; denounce openly each act of infamy; threaten official death and public disgrace in your general orders against all who resist your instructions or who reflect dishonor on the Republic. But at the same time, like Washington, reanimate your forces: plan with skill your schemes for the discomfiture of the enemy: call forth your noblest sons from every college and academy, from the bar, the pulpit, and the press, as Washington deputed his most trusty officers—the Putnams, and Clintons, and Greenes, and Reeds—to accompany and direct the columns against the boastful foe advancing in open view, and sounding their bugles in derision.

Let each man who through the coming century shall strive to defend our national heights against official corruption, whether it comes secretly, in silence and in darkness, or in broad day, like an army with banners,—let each man feel as Washington taught his troops to feel, that behind him are the entrenchments of law and the Constitution, and a watchful, loyal, sustaining, and appreciative people.

We have hastily glanced at the incidents of two days in the war of the revolution, and the rounding century will presently embrace in turn each chief event in that memorable struggle.

As we reverently recall our colonial and revolutionary fathers in the council chamber and in the field, as we cling with affection and pride to the Republic which they founded, with its widened boundaries, its welded unity, its extended freedom; its relations peaceful with all the powers; its influence for popular rights; common schools without sectarianism, and its separation of Church and State, felt in greater or less degree by all governments and by all peoples: the thought presses that upon us devolves the duty and the responsibility of preserving all that is excellent in their work, all that is

noble in their political standard, all that is heroic in their fame.

Even now, as we linger on the century that has closed, or attempt to foreshadow that which has begun, the dignity, the purity, the stability of the Republic rests upon the honor of the generation of to-day, as it stands "a link in the chain of eternal order," between the generations that are past and those that are to come.

Reduction of Sauthier's Map Drawn Nov^r 1776.



APPENDIX.

GEN. WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

HEADQUARTERS, AT COLONEL MORRIS'S HOUSE,
16 September, 1776.

ON Saturday about sunset, six more of the enemy's ships, one or two of which were men-of-war, passed between Governor's Island and Red Hook, and went up the East River to the station taken by those mentioned in my last. In half an hour I received two expresses, one from Colonel Sargent at Horen's Hook, giving an account that the enemy, to the amount of three or four thousand, had marched to the river, and were embarked for Barn or Montresor's Island where numbers of them were then encamped; the other from General Mifflin, that uncommon and formidable movements were discovered among the enemy; which being confirmed by the scouts I had sent out, I proceeded to Haerlem, where it was supposed, or at Morrisania opposite to it, the principal attempt to land would be made. However, nothing remarkable happened that night; but in the morning they began their operations. Three ships of war came up the North River as high as Bloomingdale, which put a total stop to the removal, by water of any more of our provision; and about eleven o'clock those in the East River began a most severe and heavy cannonade, to scour the grounds, and cover the landing of their troops between Turtle Bay and the city, where breastworks had been thrown up to oppose them.

As soon as I heard the firing, I rode with all possible despatch towards the place of landing, when to my great surprise and mortification, I found the troops that had been posted in the lines retreating with the utmost precipitation, and those ordered to support them (Parsons's and Fellows's brigades) flying in every direction, and in the greatest confusion, notwithstanding the exertions of their generals to form them. I used every means in my power to rally and get them

into some order ; but my attempts were fruitless and ineffectual ; and on the appearance of a small party of the enemy, not more than sixty or seventy, their disorder increased, and they ran away in the greatest confusion, without firing a single shot.

Finding that no confidence was to be placed in these brigades, and apprehending that another party of the enemy might pass over to Haerlem Plains and cut off the retreat to this place, I sent orders to secure the heights in the best manner with the troops that were stationed on and near them ; which being done, the retreat was effected with but little or no loss of men, though of a considerable part of our baggage, occasioned by this disgraceful and dastardly conduct. Most of our heavy cannon, and part of our stores and provisions, which we were about removing, were unavoidably left in the city, though every means, after it had been determined in council to evacuate the post, had been used to prevent it. We are now encamped with the main body of the army on the Heights of Haerlem, where I should hope the enemy would meet with a defeat in case of an attack, if the generality of our troops would behave with tolerable bravery. But experience, to my extreme affliction, has convinced me that this is rather to be wished for than expected. However, I trust that there are many who will act like men, and show themselves worthy of the blessings of freedom. I have sent some reconnoitring parties to gain intelligence, if possible, of the disposition of the enemy, and shall inform Congress of every material event by the earliest opportunity.

[Writings of Washington, Vol. IV., p. 93.]

GEN. WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

HEADQUARTERS, AT COLONEL ROGER MORRIS'S HOUSE,
18, September 1776.

As my letter of the 16th contained intelligence of an important nature, and such as might lead Congress to expect that the evacuation of New York and retreat to the Heights of Haerlem, in the manner they were made, would be succeeded by some other interesting event, I beg leave to inform them, that as yet nothing has been attempted upon a large and general plan of attack. About the time of the post's departure with my letter, the enemy appeared in

several large bodies upon the plains, about two and a half miles from hence. I rode down to our advanced posts, to put matters in a proper situation, if they should attempt to come on. When I arrived there I heard a firing, which, I was informed, was between a party of our Rangers under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton, and an advanced party of the enemy. Our men came in and told me, that the body of the enemy, who kept themselves concealed, consisted of about three hundred, as near as they could guess. I immediately ordered three companies of Colonel Weedon's regiment from Virginia, under the command of Major Leitch, and Colonel Knowlton with his Rangers, composed of volunteers from different New England regiments, to try to get in their rear, while a disposition was making as if to attack them in front, and thereby draw their whole attention that way.

This took effect as I wished on the part of the enemy. On the appearance of our party in front, they immediately ran down the hill, and took possession of some fences and bushes, and a smart firing began, but at too great a distance to do much execution on either side. The parties under Colonel Knowlton and Major Leitch unluckily began their attack too soon, as it was rather in flank than in rear. In a little time Major Leitch was brought off wounded, having received three balls through his side; and, in a short time after, Colonel Knowlton got a wound, which proved mortal. Their men however persevered, and continued the engagement with the greatest resolution. Finding that they wanted a support, I advanced part of Colonel Griffith's and Colonel Richardson's Maryland regiments, with some detachments from the Eastern regiments who were nearest the place of action. These troops charged the enemy with great intrepidity, and drove them from the wood into the plain, and were pushing them from thence, having silenced their fire in a great measure, when I judged it prudent to order a retreat, fearing the enemy, as I have since found was really the case, were sending a large body to support their party.

Major Leitch, I am in hopes will recover; but Colonel Knowlton's fall is much to be regretted, as that of a brave and good officer. We had about forty wounded; the number of slain is not yet ascertained; but it is very inconsiderable. By a sergeant, who deserted from the enemy and came in this morning, I find that their party was greater than I imagined. It consisted of the second battalion of Light Infantry, a battalion of the Royal Highlanders, and three com-

panies of Hessian Riflemen, under the command of Brigadier-General Leslie. The deserter reports that their loss in wounded and missing was eighty-nine, and eight killed. In the latter, his account is too small, as our people discovered and buried double that number. This affair I am in hopes, will be attended with many salutary consequences, as it seems to have greatly inspired the whole of our troops. The sergeant further adds, that a considerable body of men are now encamped from the East to the North Rivers, between the seven and eight mile-stones under the command of General Clinton. General Howe, he believes, has his quarters at Mr. Apthorp's house.

P.S.—I should have wrote Congress by express before now, had I not expected the post every minute, which I flatter myself will be a sufficient apology for my delaying it.

The late losses we have sustained in our baggage and camp necessaries, have added much to our distress, which was very great before. I must therefore take the liberty of requesting Congress to have forwarded, as soon as possible, such a supply of tents, blankets, camp-kettles, and other articles as can be collected; we cannot be overstocked.

[Force's American Archives.]

GEN. WASHINGTON TO GEN. SCHUYLER.

HEADQUARTERS, COLONEL ROGER MORRIS'S,
ten miles from New York, September 20, 1776.

I CLEARLY see, and have severely felt the ill effects of short enlistments, and have repeatedly given Congress my sentiments thereon. I believe they are by this time convinced that there is no opposing a standing, well-disciplined army, but by one upon the same plan; and I hope, if this campaign does not put an end to this contest, they will put the army upon a different footing than what it has heretofore been. I shall take care to remind them that the terms for which De Haas's, Maxwell's, and Winds's regiments enlisted, expire the beginning of October; but if they have not already thought of taking some steps to secure them a while longer, it will be too late, except the officers will exert themselves in prevailing on the men to stay until their places can be supplied by some means or

other. If the officers are spirited and well inclined, they may lead their men as they please.

I removed my quarters to this place on Sunday last, it having been previously determined by a Council of General Officers on the preceding Thursday to evacuate New York. The reasons that principally weighed with them were, that from every information, and every movement of the enemy, it was clear that their attack was not meditated against the city; their intent evidently was, to throw their whole army between part of ours in New York and its environs, and the remainder about King's Bridge, and thereby cut off our communication with each other and with the country. Indeed, their operations on Sunday last, fully satisfied the opinion of the Council, and the steps taken in consequence; for on that morning they began their landing at Turtle Bay, and continued to throw over great numbers of men from Long Island, and from Montrossor's and Buchanan's Islands, on which they had previously lodged them. As we had exerted ourselves in removing our sick and stores of every kind, after the measure of abandoning had been determined upon, very few things, and but three or four men, fell into the enemy's hands.

On Monday last, we had a pretty sharp skirmish between two battalions of Light Infantry and Highlanders and three companies of Hessian Riflemen, commanded by Brigadier Leslie, and detachments from our army, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Knowlton, of Connecticut, and Major Leitch, of Virginia. The Colonel received a mortal wound, and the Major three balls through his body, but he is likely to do well. Their parties behaved with great bravery, and being supported with fresh troops, beat the enemy fairly from the field. Our loss, except in that of Colonel Knowlton, a most valuable and gallant officer, is inconsiderable—that of the enemy, from accounts, between eighty and one hundred wounded, and fifteen or twenty killed. This little advantage has inspirited our troops prodigiously; they find that it only requires resolution and good officers to make an enemy (that they stood in too much dread of) give way.

The British army lies encamped about two miles below us; they are busy in bringing over their cannon and stores from Long Island, and we are putting ourselves in the best posture of defence that time and circumstances will admit of.

[Force's American Archives.]]

GEN. WASHINGTON TO THE N. Y. STATE CONVENTION.

HEADQUARTERS, AT THE HEIGHTS OF HARLEM,
September 23, 1776.

SIR :—Your favour of the 21st instant, enclosing the resolution of the Representatives of the State of New York, has come duly to hand, and will be properly attended to. I am exceedingly obliged by the readiness you declare you will pay to any commands which you may receive from me respecting the great cause in which we are engaged.

The manœuvres of the enemy, before their landing on Sunday last, were various and perplexing; however, about eight o'clock in the morning, they became extremely plain and obvious. At that time they began their operations by sending three ships of war up the North River as high as Bloomingdale, which put a stop to the removal of our stores by water; and about eleven o'clock those in the East River began a constant and heavy cannonade for the purpose of scouring the grounds and covering the landing of their troops, where breastworks had been thrown up to oppose them. As soon as I heard the firing I immediately repaired to the place of landing, when, to my extreme astonishment, I discovered the troops, who were posted in the lines, retreating in the greatest disorder, and Parsons's and Fellows's brigades, who were directed to support them, retreating in the greatest confusion, and without making the slightest opposition, although only a small party of the enemy appeared in view. As I perceived no dependence could be reposed in these troops, and apprehending another impression might be made on the Harlem plains, by which means our retreat to this place might be cut off, I directed the heights to be secured, and our retreat was effected with little or no loss of men, though of a considerable part of the baggage, some of our heavy cannon and a part of our stores and provisions, which we were about removing, was unavoidably left in the city, though every means (after it had been determined in council to abandon the post) had been used to prevent it.

On Monday morning last, several parties of the enemy appeared on the high grounds opposite to our heights, and some skirmishing had happened between our troops and those of the enemy. On reconnoitring their situation, I formed the design of cutting off such of them as had or might advance to the extremity of the wood. I accordingly ordered three companies of Virginia riflemen, under the

command of Major Leitch and Colonel Knowlton with his rangers to endeavour to get in their rear, while an apparent disposition was making as if to attack them in front. The enemy ran down the hill with great eagerness to attack the party in front ; but unluckily, from some mistake or misapprehension, the parties under Major Leitch and Colonel Knowlton began the fire on their flank instead of their rear. The Major was soon brought off the field wounded, and Col. Knowlton soon received a wound, of which he is since dead. Their men however behaved with the greatest resolution. Finding that they wanted assistance, I advanced part of Colonel Griffith's and Colonel Richardson's Maryland regiments, with some detachments of Eastern troops, who charged the enemy and drove them from the wood to the plain, and were still pursuing, when I judged it prudent to withdraw them, fearing the enemy might be sending a large reinforcement to their troops which were engaged, which was the case, as I have since understood. A sergeant who deserted from the enemy has informed me their party was greater than I imagined ; as it consisted of the second battalion of Light Infantry, a battalion of Royal Highlanders, and three companies of Hessian Riflemen under the command of General Leslie. Their loss, by his report amounted to eighty-nine wounded and missing, and eight killed ; in the latter his account is altogether imperfect, as our people discovered and buried double that number. I am in hopes this little success will be productive of salutary consequences, as our army seems to be greatly inspirited by it.

[Correspondence N. Y. Provincial Congress, p. 217.]

GEN. WASHINGTON TO PATRICK HENRY, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

HEADQUARTERS, HEIGHTS OF HARLEM,
October 5, 1776.

OUR retreat from Long Island, under the peculiar circumstances we then laboured, became an act of prudence and necessity, and the evacuation of New York was a consequence resulting from the other. Indeed, after we discovered the enemy instead of making an attack upon the city were endeavouring (by means of their ships and superior land force) either to intercept our retreat, by getting in our rear, or else by landing their forces between our divisions at King's Bridge,

and those in the town, to separate the one from the other, it became a matter of the last importance to alter the disposition of the army.

These measures, however, although of the most evident utility, have been productive of some inconvenience; the troops having become in some measure dispirited by these successive retreats, and which, I presume, has also been the case among several of our friends in the country. In order to recover that military ardour, which is of the utmost moment to an army, almost immediately on my arrival at this place I formed a design of cutting off some of the enemy's light troops, who, encouraged by their successes, had advanced to the extremity of the high ground opposite to our present encampment. To effect this salutary purpose, Colonel Knowlton and Major Leitch were detached with parties of Riflemen and Rangers, to get in their rear, while a disposition was made as if to attack them in front. By some unhappy mistake, the fire was commenced from that quarter rather on their flank than in their rear, by which means though the enemy were defeated and pushed off the ground, yet they had an opportunity of retreating to their main body. This piece of success, though it tended greatly to inspire our troops with confidence, has been in some measure embittered by the loss of those two brave officers, who are dead of the wounds they received in the action. Since this skirmish except the affair at Montessor's Island, where Major Henly, another of our best officers was slain, there has been nothing of any material consequence. Indeed, the advantage obtained over the enemy's light troops might have been improved, perhaps, to a considerable extent, had we been in a proper situation to have made use of this favourable crisis, but a want of confidence in the generality of the troops has prevented me from availing myself of that, and almost every other opportunity which has presented itself.

I own my fears that this must ever be the case when our dependence is placed on men enlisted for a few months, commanded by such officers as party or accident may have furnished, and on Militia, who, as soon as they are fairly fixed in the camp, are impatient to return to their own homes; and who, from an utter disregard of all discipline and restraint among themselves, are but too apt to infuse the like spirit into others. The evils of short enlistments, and employing militia to oppose against regular and well appointed troops, I strongly urged to Congress before the last army was engaged. Indeed, my own situation at Cambridge, about the close of the last

campaign, furnished the most striking example of the fatal tendency of such measures. I then clearly foresaw that such an armament as we had good reason to expect would be sent against us, could be opposed only by troops inlisted during the war, and where every action would add to their experience and improvement, and of whom, if they were unsuccessful in the beginning, a reasonable hope might be entertained that in time they would become as well acquainted with their business as their enemies. This method, I am convinced, would have been attended with every good consequence ; for, besides the Militia's being altogether unfit for the service when called into the field, we have discovered, from experience that they are much more expensive than any other kind of troops ; and that the war could have been conducted on more moderate terms by establishing a permanent body of forces, who were equal to every contingency, than by calling in the Militia on imminent and pressing occasions.

[Force's American Archives.]

ADJ. GEN. JOSEPH REED TO HIS WIFE.

HEIGHTS NEAR KINGSBRIDGE,
Sept. 17, 1776.

I WROTE you yesterday p^r Post giving you an Account of our leaving New York. This had been determined on several Days ago—but the Removal of the Sick & many other Circumstances prevented its being done with that Expedition it ought to have been. Had the landing of the Enemy been delayed one Day longer we should have left them the City. But an unfortunate Idea took Place in the Mind of some of our Northern Generals that it might be defended or at least that some considerable Opposition might be made to the Landing—they undertook it—permitted the Enemy to land without even giving one Fire, could never be form'd but were drove by one Tenth of their Numbers—However as I gave you a particular Acc^t. yesterday I need not repeat it—Just after I had sealed my Letter & sent it away, an Acc^t. came that the Enemy were advancing upon us in three large Columns—we have so many false Reports that I desired the General to permit me to go & discover what Truth there was in the Acc^t. I accordingly went down to our most advanced Guard & while I was talking with the Officer, the Enemy's advanced Guard fired upon us at a small Distance, our men behaved

well stood & return'd the Fire till overpowered by numbers they were obliged to retreat—the Enemy advanced upon us very fast I had not quitted a House 5 minutes before they were in Possession of it—Finding how things were going I went over to the General to get some support for the brave Fellows who had behaved so well—by the Time I got to him the Enemy appeared in open view & in the most insulting manner sounded their Bugle Horns as is usual after a Fox Chase. I never felt such a sensation before it seem'd to crown our Disgrace. The General was prevailed on to order over a Party to attack them & as I had been upon the Ground which no one else had it fell to me to conduct them—an unhappy Movement was made by a Reg^t. of ours which had been ordered to amuse them while those I was with expected to take them in the Rear—but being diverted by this the Virginia Regim^t. with which I was went another course finding there was no stopping them I went with them the new Way—and in a few Minutes our brave Fellows mounted up the Rocks & attacked them then they ran in Turn—each Party sent in more Succours so that at last it became a very considerable Engagement & Men fell on every side—however our Troops still press'd on drove the Enemy above a Mile & a half till the General ordered them to give over the Pursuit fearing the whole of the Enemy's Army would advance upon them they retreated in very good order & I assure you it has given another Face of Things in our Army—the Men have recovered their Spirits & feel a Confidence which before they had quite lost—We have several Prisoners & have buried a considerable Number of their dead—our own Loss is also considerable—the Virginia Major (Leech) who went up first with me was wounded with 3 Shott in less than 3 Minutes—but our greatest Loss was a brave Officer from Connecticut whose Name & Spirit ought to be immortalized one Col Knowlton—I assisted him off & when gasping in the Agonies of Death all his Inquiry was if we had drove the Enemy.

Be not alarm'd, my dear Creature when I tell you the Horse I rode received a Shot [just] behind his fore shoulder—it happened to be [one] taken from a Number on the Hill—Tho' [many fell] round me thank God I was not struck [by] a single Ball & I have the great Happiness [to know] that I have by getting the General to [direct a] Reinforcement to go over contributed in [some way] to the Benefit which may result from this [action]. When I speak of its Importance I do not mean that I think the Enemy have suffered a Loss

which will affect their operations—but it has given Spirits to our Men that I hope they will now look the Enemy in the Face with Confidence—but alas our situation here must soon be a very distressing one if we do not receive much Relief in the Articles of stores, Provision, Forage &c. The Demands of a large Army are very great & we are in a very doubtful Condition on this Head.

[Reed Papers, N. Y. Historical Society.]

ADJ. GEN. JOSEPH REED TO HIS WIFE.

NEW YORK, Sept. 22. 1776.

I HAVE just received yours of the 20th by which I imagine one of mine wrote the Day after the Engagement of the 17th had not got to Hand wherein I gave you the particulars which I was able to do better than almost any other Person as I happened to be in it when it began & assisted in calling off our Troops—when they had pursued the Enemy as far as was thought proper. It hardly deserves the Name of a Battle, but as it was a Scene so different from what had happened the Day before it elevated our Troops very much & in that Respect has been of great Service It would take up too much Time & Paper to go into a minute Description of the whole Affair. The Substance is, that we had a Party out under a very brave Connecticut officer Knowlton (who fell) watching the Motions of the Enemy—an Acc^t was brought up that the Enemy was advancing upon us in 3 Columns—but as we had so often been deceived by these Reports—I went out to see what Truth there was in it—& fell in with the above Party—while I was talking with the Officer the Enemy advanced & the Firing began at about 50 Yards Distance as they were 10 to 1 ag^t our Party we immediately retreated—I came off to the General & after some little Hesitation prevailed on him to let a Party go up—which as I had been on the Ground I led myself they were Virginia Troops commanded by a brave Officer Major Leech—I accordingly went with them but was unhappily thwarted in my Scheme by some Persons calling to the Troops & taking them out of the Road I intended—however we went up both Men & Officers with great spirit—at the same Time some of our Troops on another Quarter moved up towards the Enemy & the Action began—Major Leech fell near me in a few Minutes with 3 Balls

through him but is likely to do well. Knowlton also fell mortally wounded I mounted him on my Horse & brought him off—In about 10 [minutes] our People pressing on with great Ardour the Enemy gave Way & left us the Ground which was strew'd pretty thick with dead chiefly of the Enemy tho it since turns out that our Loss is also considerable—The pursuit of a flying Enemy was so new a Scene that it was with Difficulty our Men could be brought to retreat—which they did in very good Order—we buried the Dead & brought off the wounded on both sides as far as our troops had pursued. We have since learned that the main Body of the Enemy was hastily advancing so that in all Probability there would have been a Reverse of Things if the Pursuit had not been given over as it was—You can hardly conceive the Change it made in our Army—I hope its Effects will be lasting—You will probably hear from other Quarters the double Escape I had—My own Horse not being at Hand I borrowed one from a young Philadelphian—he received a Shot just behind his fore Shoulder which narrowly missed my Leg. I am told that he is since dead—But the greatest was from one of our own Rascals who was running away, upon my driving him back a second Time he presented his Piece & snapp'd at me at about a Rod Distance—I seized a Piece from another Soldier & snapp'd at him—but he had the same good Luck. He has been since tried & is now under Sentence of Death—but I believe I must beg him off as after I found I could not get the Gun off, I wounded him in the Head & cut off his Thumb with my Hanger—I suppose many Persons will think it was rash & imprudent for Officers of our Rank to go into such an Action (Gen^l Puttnam, Gen. Green, many of the General's family—M^r Tilghman &^c were in it) but it was really done to animate the Troops who were quite dispirited & would not go into Danger unless their officers led the Way.

Our Situation is very much the same as it was—we are fortifying Ground naturally strong. The Enemy lay about 3 Miles from us—they have been very busy bringing over Cannon, &^c from Long Island but we cannot learn what they intend.

The Night before last there was a most dreadful Fire in the City but how it happened we are quite at a Loss—There was a Resolve of Congress against our injuring it, so that we neither set it on Fire or made any Preparations for the Purpose—Tho I make no Doubt it will be charged to us.

[Reed Papers, N. Y. Historical Society.]

GEN. GEORGE CLINTON TO NEW YORK CONVENTION.

KINGS BRIDGE, September 18, 1776.

SINCE my last, many matters of Importance to the Public, and more particularly to this State, have taken place ; But I have been so Situated as neither to find Leisure or Opportunity of communicating them to Congress. I returned late last Night from the Command of the Picquet or Advanced Party, in the Front of our Lines, and was just setting down to write to the Convention, and intended sending an Express, when I was favored with yours of Yesterday.

About the middle of last Week it was determined, for many Reasons, to evacuate the City of New York ; and accordingly Orders were given for removing the Ordnance, Military, & other Stores from thence, which, by Sunday morning was nearly effected. On Saturday, four of the Enemy's large Ships passed by the City up the North River, and anchored near Greenage, and about as many more up the East River, which anchored in Turtle Bay ; and from the Movements of the Enemy on Long Island and the small Islands in the East River, we had great reason to apprehend they intended to make a Landing, and attack our Lines somewhere near the City. Our Army for some Days had been moving upwards this way, and encamping on the Heights, south-west of Col^d. Morris's, where we intended to form Lines, and make our grand Stand. On Sunday morning the Enemy landed a very considerable Body of Troops, principally consisting of their Light Infantry & Grenadiers, near Turtle Bay, under Cover of a very heavy Cannonade from their Shipping, our Lines were but thinly manned as they were then intended only to secure a Retreat to the Rear of our Army, & unfortunately by such Troops as were so little disposed to stand in the way of Grape Shot that the main Body of them almost instantly retreated, nay, fled without a possibility of rallying them, tho' General Washington himself (who rid to the spot on hearing the Cannonade) with some other General Officers, exerted themselves to effect it.

The Enemy, on Landing, immediately formed a Line across the Island, most of our People were luckily North of it, and joined the Army. Those few that were in the City crossed the River, chiefly to Powles-Hook, so that our loss in Men, Artillery, or Stores, is very inconsiderable. I don't believe it exceeds 100 Men, and I fancy most of them, from their Conduct, staid out of Choice. Before

Evening, the Enemy landed the main Body of their Army, took Possession of the City, & marched up the Island, & encamped on the Heights extending from McGown's and the Black Horse to the North River.

On Monday morning, about ten o'Clock, a party of the Enemy, consisting of Highlanders, Hessians, the Light Infantry, Grenadiers, and English Troops (Number uncertain) attack'd our advanc'd Party, commanded by Col^l. Knowlton at Martje Davits Fly. They were opposed with spirit, and soon made to retreat to a clear Field, south-west of that about 200 paces, where they lodged themselves behind a Fence covered with Bushes our People attacked them in Turn, and caused them to retreat a second Time, leaving five dead on the Spot, we pursued them to a Buckwheat Field on the Top of a high Hill, distance about four hundred paces, where they received a considerable Reinforcement, with several Field Pieces, and there made a Stand a very brisk Action ensued at this Place, which continued about Two Hours our People at length worsted them a third Time, caused them to fall back into an Orchard, from thence across a Hollow, and up another Hill not far distant from their own Lines—A large Column of the Enemy's Army being at this Time discovered to be in motion, and the Ground we then occupied being rather disadvantageous a Retreat likewise, without bringing on a general Action, (which we did not think prudent to risk,) rather insecure, our party was therefore ordered in, and the Enemy was well contented to hold the last Ground we drove them to.

We lost, on this occasion, Col^l Knowlton a brave Officer & sixteen Privates, kill'd. Major Leech, from Virginia, and about Eight or ten subaltern Officers and Privates wounded. The Loss of the Enemy is uncertain. They carried their Dead and wounded off, in and soon after the Action; but we have good Evidence of their having upwards of 60 kill'd, & violent presumption of 100. The Action, in the whole, lasted abt 4 Hours.

I consider our Success in this small affair, at this Time, almost equal to a Victory. It has animated our Troops, gave them new Spirits, and erased every bad Impression, the Retreat from Long Island, &c. had left on their minds, they find they are able, with inferior Numbers, to drive their Enemy, and think of nothing now but Conquest.

Since the above affair, nothing material has happened the Enemy keep close to their Lines. Our advanc'd Parties continue at their

former Station. We are daily throwing up Works to prevent the Enemy advancing ; great attention is paid to Fort Washington, the Posts opposite to it on the Jersey Shore, & the Obstructions in the River which, I have reason to believe, is already effectual, so as to prevent their Shipping passing ; however, it is intended still to add to them, as it is of the utmost consequence to keep the Enemy below us.

[Miscellaneous MSS., N. Y. Historical Society.]

GEN. GEORGE CLINTON TO DR. PETER TAPPEN.

KING'S BRIDGE 21st. Sept. 1776.

I HAVE been so hurried & Fatigued out of the ordinary way of my Duty by the removal of our Army from New York & great Part of the public stores to this Place that it has almost worn me out tho' as to Health I am well as usual ; but how my Constitution has been able to stand lying out several Nights in the Open Air & exposed to Rain is almost a Miracle to me—Whom at Home the least Wet indeed some Times the Change of Weather almost laid me up.

The Evacuation of the City I suppose has much alarmed the Country. It was judged untenable in Council of Gen^l Officers considering the Enemy possessed of Long-Island &c., and was therefore advised to be evacuated. The Artillery (at least all worth moving) & almost all the public stores were removed out of it so that when the Enemy landed & attacked our Lines near the City we had but few Men there (those indeed did not behave well) our Loss however by our Retreat from there either in Men or Stores is very inconsiderable. I would not be understood that it is my Opinion to evacuate the City neither do I mean now to condemn the Measure it is done intended for the best I am certain.

The same Day the Enemy possessed themselves of the City, to wit, last Sunday they landed the Main Body of their Army & encamped on York Island across about the Eight Mile Stone & between that & the four Mile Stone. Our Army at least one Division of it lay at Col^o Morris's & so southward to near the Hollow Way which runs across from Harlem Flat to the North River at Matje Davit's Fly. About halfway between which two Places our Lines run across the River which indeed at that Time were only began but are now in a very defensible state. On Monday Morning the Enemy attacked

our Advanced Party Commanded by Col^o Knowlton (a brave Officer who was killed in the Action) near the Point of Matje Davit's Fly the Fire was very brisk on both sides our People however soon drove them back into a Clear Field about 200 Paces South East of that where they lodged themselves behind a Fence covered with Bushes our People pursued them but being obliged to stand exposed in the open Field or take a Fence at a Considerable Distance they preferred the Latter it was indeed adviseable for we soon brought a Couple of Field Pieces to bear upon them which fairly put them to Flight with two Discharges only the Second Time our People pursued them closely to the Top of a Hill about 400 paces distant where they received a very Considerable Reinforcement & made their Second Stand Our People also had received a Considerable Reinforcement, and at this Place a very brisk Action commenced which continued for near two Hours in which Time we drove the Enemy into a Neighbouring orchard from that across a Hollow & up another Hill not far Distant from their own Encampment, here we found the Ground rather Disadvantageous & a Retreat insecure we therefore thot proper not to pursue them any farther & retired to our first Ground leaving the Enemy on the last Ground we drove them to—that Night I commanded the Right Wing of our advanced Party or Picket on the Ground the Action first began of which Col^o Pawling & Col^o Nicoll's Regiment were part and next Day I sent a Party to bury our Dead. They found but 17. The Enemy removed theirs in the Night we found above 60 Places where dead Men had lay from Pudles of Blood & other appearances & at other Places fragments of Bandages & Lint. From the best Account our Loss killed & wounded is not much less than seventy seventeen of which only dead (this Account of our Loss exceeds what I mentioned in a Letter I wrote Home indeed at that Time I only had an account of the Dead—the Wounded were removed—12 oclock M. Sunday two Deserters from on Board the Bruno Man of War lying at Morrisania say the Enemy had 300 killed on Monday last,) the Rest most likely do well & theirs is somewhere about 300—upwards it is generally believed—Tho I was in the latter Part indeed almost the whole of the Action I did not think so many Men were engaged. It is without Doubt however they had out on the Occasion between 4 and 5000 of their choicest Troops & expected to have drove us off the Island. They are greatly mortified at their Disappointment & have ever since been exceedingly modest & quiet not having even

patrolling Parties beyond their Lines—I lay within a Mile of them the Night after the battle & never heard Men work harder I believe they thought we intended to pursue our Advantage & Attack them next Morning.

If I only had a Pair of Pistols I could I think have shot a Rascal or two I am sure I would at least have shot a puppy of an Officer I found slinking off in the heat of the Action.

[N. Y. City during the American Revolution, published by the N. Y. Mercantile Library Association.]

GEN. GREENE TO NICHOLAS COOKE, GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND.

CAMP AT HARLEM HEIGHTS,
September 17. 1776.

I SUPPOSE you have heard of the retreat from Long-Island, and the evacuation of New York. The retreats were both judicious and necessary, our numbers being very insufficient to hold such an extent of ground. His Excellency had proposed to evacuate the city and suburbs of New York some time before the enemy made their last landing, and had the Quartermaster-General been able to furnish the necessary wagons to remove the stores and baggage, the retreat would have been effected in good order, had the enemy delayed their landing twenty-four hours longer. Almost all the old standing regiment was drawn out of the city, in order to oppose the enemy at Hell-Gate, where they made an appearance of a very large body of troops, and movements as if they intended a landing.

We made a miserable, disorderly retreat from New York, owing to the disorderly conduct of the Militia, who ran at the appearance of the enemy's advance guard; this was General Fellows's brigade. They struck a panick into the troops in the rear, and Fellows's and Parsons's whole brigade ran away from about fifty men, and left his Excellency on the ground within eighty yards of the enemy, so vexed at the infamous conduct of the troops, that he sought death rather than life.

The retreat was on the 14th of this instant, from New York; most of the troops got off, but we lost a prodigious deal of baggage and stores. On the 16th we had a skirmish at Harlem Heights: a party of about a thousand came and attacked our advance post. They met with a very different kind of reception from what they did the

day before. The fire continued about an hour, and the enemy retreated; our people pursued them, and by the spirited conduct of General Putnam and Colonel Reed the Adjutant General, our people advanced upon the plain ground without cover, and attacked them and drove them back. His Excellency sent and ordered a timely retreat to our advanced post, for he discovered or concluded the enemy would send a large reinforcement, as their main body lay near by. I was sick when the army retreated from Long Island, which by the by, was the best effected retreat I ever read or heard of, considering the difficulty of the retreat. The Army now remains quiet, but expect an attack every day. Col. Varnum's and Col. Hitchcock's regiments were in the last action, and behaved nobly, but neither of the Colonels was with them, both being absent—one sick, the other taking care of the sick.

[Force's American Archives.]

LEWIS MORRIS, JR., TO HIS FATHER.

HEADQUARTERS, Septbr 18th 1776.

MONDAY morning an advanced party, Colonel Knowlton's regiment, was attacked by the enemy upon a height a little to the southwest of Days's Tavern, and after opposing them bravely and being overpowered by their numbers they were forced to retreat, and the enemy advanced upon the top of the hill opposite to that which lies before Dayes's door, with a confidence of Success, and after rallying their men by a bugle horn and resting themselves a little while, they descended the hill with an intention to force our flanking party, which extended from the North river to the before mentioned hill, but they received so warm a fusilade from that flank and a party that went up the hill to flank them and cut off their retreat, that they were forced to give way. Their loss is something considerable, ours, about forty wounded and twelve killed. The impression it made upon the minds of our people is a most signal victory to us, and the defeat a considerable mortification to them.

[From the original in possession of Harry M. Morris.]

COL. G. S. SILLIMAN TO HIS WIFE.

HARLEM HEIGHTS,

17 Sept. 1776. 2 o'clock P.M.

YESTERDAY at 7 o'clock in the morning we were alarmed with the sight of a considerable number of the enemy on the Plains below us about a mile distant.—Our Brigades which form a line across the Island where I am were immediately ordered under arms—but as the enemy did not immediately advance we grounded our arms & took spades & shovels & went to work & before night had thrown up lines across the Island—There was nothing before but three little redoubts in about a mile & we are at work this day in strengthening them. But yesterday a little before noon we heard a strong firing about half a mile below us in the woods near where we had two Brigades lying as an advanced guard. The enemy in a large body advanced in the woods a little before 12 o'clock & began a heavy fire on those two Brigades who maintained the fire obstinately for some time & then they were reinforced by several regiments & the fire continued very heavy from the musketry & from field pieces about two hours—in which time our people drove the regulars back from post to post about a mile & a half & then left them pretty well satisfied with their dinner since which they have been very quiet. Our loss on this occasion by the best information is about 25 killed & 40 or 50 wounded. The enemy by the best accounts have suffered much more than we.

A prisoner we have I am told says that Genl. Howe himself commanded the regular & Genl. Washington & Genl. Putnam were both with our Troops. They have found now that when we meet them on equal ground we are not a set of people that will run from them—but that they have now had a pretty good drubbing, tho' this was an action between but a small party of the army.

[Notes to Jones's History of New York during the American Revolution, now in press for the N. Y. Historical Society.]

GEN. KNOX TO HIS BROTHER WILLIAM KNOX.

HEIGHTS OF HARLEM, 8 MILES FROM N. YORK, Sept. 23, 1776.

THE affair of last Monday has had some good consequences toward raising the peoples spirits—they find that if they stick to these mighty men they will run as fast as other people. Our people pursued them

nearly two miles—about 1,500 of our people engaged of the enemy about the same number viz., the 2d. Battalion light infantry, the Highlands or 42d. 6th Battalion of Grenadiers and some Hessians. The grounds on which we now possess are strong. I think we shall defend them—if we dont I hope God will punish us both in this World and the World to come if the fault is ours.

[Knox Papers, N. Y. Historic Genealogical Society.]

MAJOR NICHOLAS FISH TO JOHN M^CKESSON SECRETARY N. Y. CONVENTION.

KINGSBRIDGE, 19th Sept^r 1776.

OUR Retreat from the City, you no Doubt must have heard of er'e this. This Phoenomenon took Place on Sunday Morn^g last when our Brigade, who were the last in the City excepting the Guards marched to the lines back of Stuyvesants, where from the Movements of the Enemy it was evident was the determination for landing.—The Enemy's Ships of War being drawn up in line of Battle parallel to the shore the Troops to the amount of about 4,000 being embarked in flat bottom Boats, and the Boats paraded—A Cannonade from the Ships began, which far exceeded my Ideas, and which seemed to infuse a Panic thro' the whole of our Troops, especially the Connecticut Troops who unfortunately were posted upon the left, where the Enemy landed without the least opposition ; for upon their near approach to the Shore these dastardly sons of Cowardice deserted their Lines & fled in the greatest Disorder & precipitature & I know not but I may venture to say Infected those upon the Right, who speedily copied their vile conduct & then pursued them in their flight. I am sorry to say that the Panic seized as well Officers (& those of distinction) as Men, in so much that it magnified the Number of the Enemy to thrice the Reality & generated substances from their own shadows, which greatly assisted them in their flight to the Heights above Harlem.

We are now in possession of the ground from the Heights of Harlem to the Heights of West Chester, our advance Guard is posted a Mile from our Lines ; here it was that our brave and heroic Marylanders, Virginians, &c. made a Noble & resolute stand against the Efforts of the Enemy on Monday the 16th drove them back, pur-

sued, and forced them to retire—The Conduct of our Troops on this occasion was so counter to that of some others the preceding Day as nearly to form a Counterprise.

Our troops were in a most desponding Condition before, but now are in good spirits.

P.S. In the action of the 16th we lost about 17 killed and I believe as many wounded. It is remarkable that all our killed were shot thro' the Head which induces the belief that they were first taken Prisoners & then massacred.—The Number of the Enemy killed and wounded is not yet known, but it is generally thought, they far exceed us.

[Historical Magazine, Second Series, III., 33.]

JOHN GOOCH TO THOMAS FAYERWEATHER, MERCHANT AT BOSTON.

NEW JERSEY. FORT CONSTITUTION, Sept. 23. 1776.

I KNOW you must be anxious for the certainty of events of which you can have at that distance but a confused account, as I was on the spot will endeavor to give you as Concise & Just account as possible ; on the 15th Inst we evacuated New York & took all stores of every kind out of the City, and took Possession of the hights of Haerlem eight miles from the City, the Enemy encamp'd about two miles from us ; on the 16th the Enemy advanced and took Possession of a hight on our Right Flank ab^t half a mile Distance with about 3000 men, a Party from our Brigade of 150 men who turned out as Volunteers under the command of Lieut. Col^o Crary of the Regm^t I belong to were ordered out if possible to dispossess them, in about 20 minutes the Engagement began with as terrible a fire as ever I heard, when Orders came for the whole Brigade immediately to march to support the first detachment, the Brigade Consisted of ab^t 900 men, we immediately formed in front of the Enemy and march'd up in good order through their fire, which was incessant till within 70 yards, when we Engaged them in that situation, we engaged them for one hour and eight minits, when the Enemy Broke & Ran, we pursued them to the next hights, when we were ordered to Retreat. Our loss does not exceed in killed and wounded twenty five men, the loss of the Enemy was very considerable but cannot be ascertained, as we observ'd them to carry of their dead and wounded the whole time of the Engagement, they left a Number of killed and

wounded on the Field of Battle & a great number of small Armes, the great Superiority of Numbers and every other advantage the Enemy had, when considered makes the Victory Glorious, and tho' but over a part of their Army yet the Consequences of it are attended with advantages very great, as they immediately quited the hights all round us and have not been troublesome since, our people behaved with the greatest Spirit, and the New England men have gained the first Lawrells. I received a slight wound in the Anckle at the first of the Engagement but never quited the Field during the Engagement. I'm now Ready to give them the second part whenever they have an appetite, as I'm convinced whenever stir from their ships we shall drubb them.

[N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register, XXX., 334.]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM AN OFFICER IN OUR ARMY TO HIS FRIEND IN THIS TOWN, DATED NEW HARLEM, SEPT. 21, 1776.

NEW LONDON, Sept 27.

LAST Monday the Enemy landed at New York, under Cover of their Shipping, when our whole Army retreated to this Place. As for myself I was out on a scouting Party as far as Hunt's Point—and on hearing the Cannon I immediately returned to the Regiment of Rangers, but too late to go into the City—Well, on Monday Morning the General ordered us to go and take the Enemy's advanced Guard; accordingly we set out just before Day, and found where they were; at Day-brake we were discovered by the Enemy, who were 400 strong, and we were 120—they march'd up within six Rods of us, and there form'd to give us Battle which we were ready for; and Colonel Knowlton gave Orders to fire, which we did, and stood theirs till we perceived they were getting their Flank-Guards round us. After giving them eight Rounds a Piece the Colonel gave Orders for Retreating, which we performed very well, without the Loss of a Man while Retreating, though we lost about 10 while in Action. We retreated two Miles and a Half and then made a Stand, and sent off for a Reinforcement, which we soon received, and drove the Dogs near three Miles.—My poor Colonel, in the second Attack, was shot just by my Side, the Ball entered the small of his Back—I took hold of him, asked him if he was badly wounded? he told me he was; but, says he, I do not value my Life if we do but get the Day: I then

ordered two Men to carry him off. He desired me by all Means to keep up this Flank. He seemed as unconcern'd and calm as tho' nothing had happened to him. In the Spot where the Colonel was wounded, at least within 4 Rods round him, lay 15 or 16 of the Enemy dead, with 5 or 6 of our People. Several Deserters say we made great Havock among them. The next Day we went to bury our Dead, and found near a Dozen with their Heads split open by the Hessians.

[Connecticut Gazette, Sept. 27, 1776.]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO A GENTLEMAN IN ANNAPOLIS, DATED
HEADQUARTERS, SEPT. 17, 1776.

WE are now encamped between York and King's Bridge, on very advantageous heights, and have formed our lines from the North River to a Creek that makes out of the East River, running up to King's Bridge.

Soon after we came to New York, there was a council held by the General Officers, and the question was put, whether New York was tenable against the King's forces. It was carried in the negative.

Three days ago the whole of our troops evacuated New York ; and the day before yesterday the Kings troops landed about three miles below this, where there were two brigades stationed, who abandoned their posts with precipitation.

Yesterday morning the Regulars came within half a mile of our lines, and made a stand. A few of our scouts, who were out, attacked and drove them off. In two hours after, two thousand of them returned. Gen. Beall sent out three companies of Riflemen, under the command of Major Mantz, who attacked them. Immediately Gen. Washington reinforced with the remainder of our brigade, together with Gen. Weedon's regiment from Virginia, Major Price's three independent companies, and one regiment of Rhode Islanders. Never did troops go to the field with more cheerfulness and alacrity ; when there began a heavy fire on both sides. It continued about one hour, when our brave Southern troops dislodged them from their posts. The enemy rallied, and our men beat them the second time. They rallied again ; our troops drove them the third time, and were rushing on them, but the enemy had got on an eminence, and our troops were ordered to retreat, the General considering there might

be a large number of the enemy behind the hill concealed ; which was the case. We were informed by a prisoner that our men took, there were about eight or ten thousand concealed.

From the number of the enemy that I saw lay on the field dead and wounded, I think their loss must be three or four times ours. I have not yet been able to get a full account of our loss, only of our brigade, which is as follows : Capt. Low wounded through both his thighs. Twelve privates wounded, and three missing. Major Leitch, of Col. Weedon's regiment received three balls through his belly. More is the pity, for never was a braver hero. He stood the field, with the greatest bravery, till the third shot, when he was obliged to fall. He appears to be in good spirits. The Doctors are of opinion that he will recover. Col. Knowlton from Boston, killed in the field who distinguished himself at Bunker's Hill, as well as in this engagement. He will be interred to-day with all the honours of war.

From our present situation, it is firmly my opinion we shall give them a genteel drubbing, in case the Yankees will fight with as much spirit as the Southern troops. As near as I can collect, our loss, killed, and wounded, and taken, amounts to fifty men. We expect every hour that the general engagement will come on ; and if we prove successful, the campaign will be settled for this present year. Gen. Washington gave great applause to our Maryland troops, for their gallant behaviour yesterday.

[Force's American Archives.]

COL. SMALLWOOD TO THE CONVENTION OF MARYLAND.

CAMP OF THE MARYLAND REGULARS, HEAD-QUARTERS, Oct. 12, 1776.

GENERAL WASHINGTON [Sept. 15] expressly sent and drew our regiment from its brigade, to march down towards New York, to cover the retreat, and to defend the baggage, with direction to take possession of an advantageous eminence near the enemy, upon the main road, where we remained under arms the best part of the day, till Sargent's brigade came in with their baggage, who were the last troops coming in, upon which the enemy divided their main body into two columns, one filing off on the North River, endeavoured to flank and surround us ; we had orders to retreat in good order, which was done, our corps getting within the lines a little after dusk.

The next day, about 1000 of them made an attempt upon our lines, and were first attacked by the brave Col. Knowlton of New England, who lost his life in the action, and the Third Virginia Regiment, who were immediately joined by three independent companies under Major Price, and some part of the Maryland Flying Camp, who drove them back to their lines, it is supposed with the loss of 400 men killed and wounded ; our party had about 100 killed and wounded, of the former only 15. Since which we have been viewing each other at a distance, and strongly entrenching till the 9th of October, when three of their men-of-war passed up the North river above King's Bridge, under a heavy cannonade from our batteries, which has effectually cut off our communication, by water, with Albany.

[Ridgeley's Annals of Annapolis, p. 261.]

CAP. BEATTY OF THE MARYLAND LINE, TO HIS FATHER COL. WILLIAM BEATTY, FREDRICKTOWN.

CAMP NEAR KINGS BRIDGE, Sept^r 18th 1776.

I HAVE something worth telling you of what happened this week. Last Sunday the Enemy landed about 3 miles below us, and at the sight of 150 of them one brigade & a half of New England troops ran away in the most precipitated manner & chief of them lost their baggage ; if they had stood their ground they might have cut them off. But by their landing they surrounded many of our troops in York which had no time to get out But they have a strong fort near New York where they are & have 3 months provision & ammunition a plenty, & the commander declares that he will not surrender while he has either. On Monday last the enemy thought to drive our troops farther, sallyed out & were attack by Major Mantz with the 3 rifle companys of our battalion under his command and Major Price with 3 of the independent companys of Maryland troops & 3 other companys of Maryland Flying Camp & a battalion of Virginians & some Northern troops the attack was very sharp on both sides for one hour & a half & then the enemy retreated one mile & a half to their lines—In all the action we lost but about 20 men killed & about as many wounded—among the dead is one Colonel of the Northern troops. The men all behaved with much bravery. In Capt Goods company there was but two men wounded,

Capt Reynolds one, Capt Grooh two, one of which is the blind Cuppers son in Fredktown. The other learnt the hatters trade with Major Price, his wound is in the breast, the other on the back of his arm above the joint of his wrist & so down to his fingers, the bone is not broke Our Company lay out from our tents from Sunday morning till Tuesday night

[Historical Magazine, Second Series, I., 147.]

MAJOR SAMUEL SHAW TO HIS FATHER FRANCIS SHAW.

FORT WASHINGTON, Sept. 18. 1776.

WE are now in a much more proper place for carrying on the war than when in New York, as the enemy's ships can now be of no service to them in attacking. The day before yesterday we had a proof of this, when a part of them attempted to force a passage through some woods, and to take possession of a number of heights, but were repulsed with loss by an equal if not inferiour body of our troops who behaved with as much bravery as men possibly could.

[Shaw's Journals, p. 20.]

SAMUEL CHASE TO GEN. GATES.

PHILADELPHIA, September 21. 1776.

ON this Day Week the Enemy landed a Body of forces at Turtle Bay (after a severe Cannonade from their Ships in the East River to scour the Country and cover their Landing) our Troops posted in Lines thrown up to oppose their Landing abandoned them at the first appearance of the Enemy, in the utmost precipitation and Confusion: Two Brigades, commanded by Generals Parsons and Fellows, were ordered to support them, they also fled in every Direction, without firing a single Shot, notwithstanding the Exertions of their Generals to form them, and oh, disgraceful, on the appearance of only about sixty or seventy of the Enemy! by this infamous Conduct We lost a great part of our Baggage and most of our heavy Cannon which had been left at N York—our army retreated, and possessed themselves of the Heights of Harlem; our Headquarters at Roger Morris's house. On Monday last the Enemy appeared in the plains, $2\frac{1}{2}$ Miles from the Heights, about 400 under General

Leslie A Skirmish began between them and a Party of Volunteers from several New England regiments commanded by Col^o Knolton. our People were supported by Companies from a Virginia Battalion and from two Militia Maryland Regiments. The Enemy were obliged to retreat, with the Loss of about 100 killed and prisoners—Col^o Knolton, a brave officer, was killed. Major Leitch of May^d was wounded and despaired of. The Enemies main Army is now encamped between 7 and 8 Miles Stones General Howe's Head Quarters at one M^r Apthorp's.

[Gates Papers : N. Y. Historical Society.]

AMERICAN GENERAL ORDERS.

HEADQUARTERS, 16th September, 1776.

(Parole, Beall)

(Countersign, Maryland)

THE arrangement for this Night upon the heights commanding the the hollow way from the North River to the Main Road leading from New York to Kingsbridge. Gen. Clinton to form next to the North River, and extend to the left. Gen. Scott's Brigade next to Gen. Clinton's. Lieut. Col. Sayer of Col. Griffith's Regiment, with the three Companies intended for a reinforcement to day to form upon the left of Scott's Brigade. Gen. Nixon's & Col. Sergeants Division, Col. Weedon's & Major Price's Regiments, are to retire to their Quarters and refresh themselves, but to hold themselves in readiness to turn out at a minutes warning. Gen. McDougall to establish proper Guards against his Brigade upon the heights from Morris's House, to Gen. McDougalls Camp, to furnish proper Guards to prevent a surprise, not less than twenty Men from each Regiment, Gen. Putnam commands upon the right flank to Night, Gen. Spencer from McDougall's Brigade up to Morris's House. Should the Enemy attempt to force the pass to-Night, Gen. Putnam is to apply to Gen. Spencer for a reinforcement.

HEADQUARTERS, Sept. 17, 1776.

(Parole, Leitch)

(Countersign, Virginia)

THE General most heartily thanks the Troops commanded yesterday by Major Leitch, who first advanced on the Enemy, and the others who so resolutely supported them, the Behaviour Yesterday is such a Contrast to that of some Troops the day before, as must shew

what may be done where Officers and Soldiers will exert themselves. Once more therefore the General calls upon Officers and Men to act up to the Noble Cause in which they are engaged, and support the Honour and Liberties of their Country.

The Gallant and brave Col. Knowlton who was an Honour to any Country, having fallen yesterday while gallantly fighting, Capt. Brown is to take the Command of the Party lately Commanded by Col. Knowlton; Officers & Men are to obey him accordingly.

The loss of the Enemy yesterday undoubtedly would have been much greater, if the orders of the Commander in Chief had not in some instance been contradicted by some inferior Officers, who, however well they may mean, ought not to presume to direct. It is therefore Ordered that no Officer Commanding a Party, and having received Orders from the Commander in Chief, depart from them without Counter Orders from the same Authority, and as many may otherwise err thro' ignorance, the Army is now acquainted that the General Orders are delivered by the Adjutant General, one of the Aid de Camps, Mr Tilghman, or Col. Moylan the Quartermaster General.

[MS. Orderly Book, McDougall's Brigade, N. Y. Historical Society.]

EXTRACTS FROM THE MS. LITERARY DIARY AND JOURNAL OF OCCURRENCES KEPT BY EZRA STILES, D.D., NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF YALE COLLEGE.

Nov. 10, 1776. General Greene's letter 4th October speaking of the Enemy's Landing near Turtle Bay & tak'g possessⁿ of the City of N. Y. 15th Sept^r. "The Panic that struck Gen. Fellows's & communicated itself to Gen. Parsons' Brigade disgraced the last Retreat. The 2 Brigades run away from about 40 or fifty men, and left Gen^l Washington standing alone within an hundred yards of the Enemy. This disagreeable circumstance made the last Retreat very disgraceful. The Enemy next day at Harlem Heights, flushed with the successes of the day before approached and attacked our Lines, where I had the honor to command. The action or rather skirmish lasted about two hours: our people beat the Enemy off the Ground. Col. Varnum & Col. Hitchcocks Reg^t behaved exceedingly spirited and all the officers that were with the Regiments. The Colonels were both absent. Had all the Colonies good officers, there is no danger of the Troops: never was Troops that would stand in the

Field longer than the American Soldiery. If the officers were as good as the men and had only a few months to form the troops by Discipline, America might bid Defiance to the whole World. Gen. Putnam and the Adj^t General were in the Action and behaved nobly." End G. Green's Lett.

It is said in Gen^l Mifflins Lett. of abot 23 Oct. that a Deserter informs, a canon shot killed a Centinel and shattered Gen^l Howes Leg so that his Life is doubtful.

Extracts from Philad^a Letters. Wm Ellery Esq "Phila Oct 5, 1776. Gen^l Mifflin told me that our men behaved bravely in the action (16 Sept) That we lost about one hundred killed and wounded and beat the Enemy from the field of Battle & the account he could rely on with about 400 killed and wounded."

Phil^a 21 Sept. "The Enemy's Party consisted of Two Battalions and *three* companies."

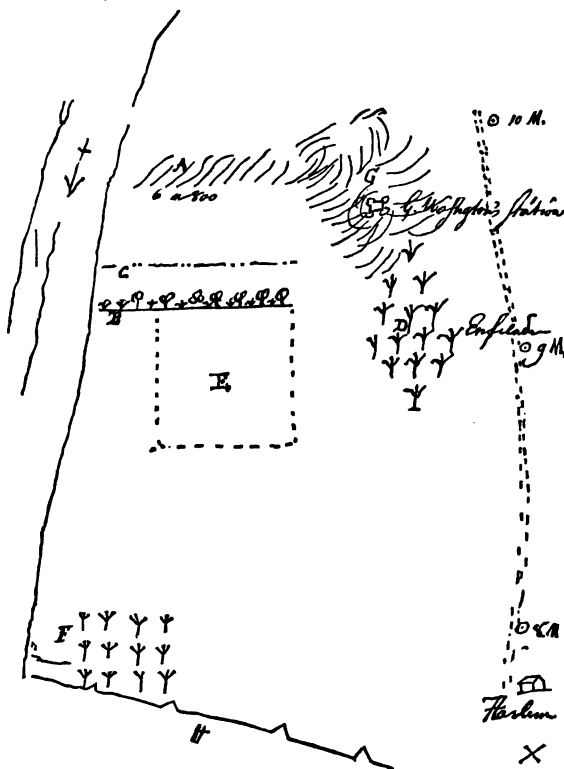
Phil^a Oct. 11. "Some of our people did indeed run from the Enemy when they landed at Turtle Bay (Sept 15)—the very next day some of those very men fought gallantly. I have this from Gen. Mifflin & David Hopkins, who saw the Fight; and they both agree in saying that the last (or best) account they could get & fr the appear^{ce} of the field of Battle the Enemy lost killed & wounded in that fight between 4 & five hundred men: and we had K. & W. the former says about 100, the latter says—not so many. Our troops drove them off the Field when the numbers on both sides were equal.—at present a defensive war seems to be the most prudent."

Sept. 24 1776. This morning ar Report here at Dighton of a battle at N. York last Wednesday. It came thus—One Clark of Swanzy returned there yesterday 23 Sept P.M. from Gov. Trumbll (to whom he had been sent on business about some Connecticut Fire Arms.) He says Gov. Trumbull read him his Sons Letter from N. York giving an acco^t of an Action—that the Kings Troops chiefly Hessians marched out of the City and attacked us about half way between the City and Kings bridge; that we fought and repulsed them; a 2^d Battle since Evacuⁿ of N. York.

Sept 27, 1776. Last Evening a Post came into Taunton a letter from L^t Ephraim Crossman to his father—dated N. York almost to Kings brⁱge Sept 17 (N. B. tuesday) 1776—* * * * "They attacked us next day (I suppose mondy 16 Sept) & I turned out volunteer & followed them and *we won the ground drove them till they brought their ships to bear on us*, and the grape shot flew thick

eno' for once But very few in our Company or Brigade has got a rag but what they have on" (Having thrown away everything in the Rout of the day before).

Oct. 18, 1776. When I was at Fairfield I saw Sloss Hobart Esq a sensible Gent. & a member of the New York Convention. He gave me the following draught of the Action of O 16 Sept which began near the 14 m Stone & ended at the 8 m Stone.



EXPLANATION.

- A. The North Side of a Hollow way where the Action began.
- B. Fence, behind which the Enemy rallied the first time.
- C. Fence, from whence our People attacked the Enemy at B. 150 yards apart.
- D. No Field pieces, but Virginia Detachment enfiladed the Enemy.
- E. Buckwheat field, where the Enemy rallied a Second time & an action ensued for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour when the Enemy fled and attempting to rally in an orchard at.
- F. Were so closely pursued, that they stood but a few minutes when the Rout became general.

We have two General Clinton's in our Army. From one of them who was in the Action Mr. Hobart received the account. Gen. Putnam & Gen. Greene commanded in the Action with about 15 to eighteen hundred men, the Enemy having in the Action from 30 to 4500, Gen. Clinton & Gen. Mifflin were present in the Action as spectators. Gen. Clinton said he was ordered next day to bury the dead left on the field and buried 78 of the Enemy, the most of which fell in the Buckwheat Field. He judged we lost 120 killed & wounded—the Enemy 400 killed besides wounded : but phaps more probably less. Mr Hobart saw one who escaped from Harlem who told him that he counted 190 wounded of the Enemy in one barn & 110 in another, so 300 wounded & this not all. On the whole we fought well in this action.

Oct. 9. 1776. Major Lamb of N. Y. is just returned from his Captivity * * * He also told me that an officer came on board on Lds'dy Evening (15 Sept) damming the Yankees for runaway cowards & storming that there was no chance to fight & get honor & rise—he was in the Monday Action also & came again on board O Evening cursing & damming the War, saying he had found the Americans would fight & that it would be impossible to conquer them.

WM. ELLERY TO NICHOLAS COOKE, GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND.

PHILADELPHIA Oct^r 11th 1776.

I SAW General Mifflin lately, and he informed that in the fight the day after the enemy took possession of New York, by the best accounts he could get, and from the appearance of the field of battle, they lost between four and five hundred killed and wounded ; and that we lost about one hundred killed and wounded. In the first part of this account Jared Hopkins, son of the minister in Newport, who saw the fight, agrees with the General, but says, that he saw our killed and wounded, and that they were much short of that number. They both, too, agree that some of our men who had behaved shamefully the day before fought gallantly there, and that with equal numbers we drove the enemy from the field. I believe they think the Americans will fight notwithstanding we have retreated and retreated.

General Washington, as I am told, played off a pretty manœuvre the other day. Determined to remove the grain and the furniture

of the houses from Harlem, he drew out into the field a party of seventeen hundred. The enemy turned out as many. They approached within three hundred yards and looked at each other. While they were thus opposed front to front, our wagons carried off the grain and furniture. When this was accomplished, both parties retired within their lines. It is said that our men preserved very good faces. It would be of use to draw out our men in battle array frequently, to let them look the enemy in the face, and have frequent skirmishes with them.

[Force's American Archives.]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM HARLEM, DATED OCT. 3.

"YESTERDAY morning eleven hundred men were ordered to parade at daylight, to bring off the corn, hay &c which lay on Harlem plains between the enemy and us. This property has lain for a fortnight past unmolested, both sides looking at it, and laying claim to it until to day, when it was brought off by us. A covering party were within musket shot of the enemy, but they made no other movements than to man their lines ; and three thousand of our man appearing, struck their tents, expecting an attack. Our fatigue party finished the business, and not a single shot was fired. These plains would afford an excellent field for a fight. I really expected an action, but the enemy declined it.

[Freeman's Journal or N. H. Gazette, Oct. 22, 1776.]

FROM GORDON'S HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WAR.

Sept. 16, 1776. On the Monday there was a tolerable skirmish between two battalions of light infantry and highlanders, and three companies of Hessian riflemen commanded by Brigadier Leslie, and detachments from the American army under the command of lieut. col. Knolton of Connecticut and major Leitch of Virginia. The colonel received a mortal wound, and the major three balls through his body, but is likely to do well. Their parties behaved with great bravery, and being supplied with fresh troops, beat the enemy fairly from the field. The loss of the Americans, except in col. Knolton, a most valuable and gallant officer, was inconsiderable ;

that of the enemy between 80 and 100 wounded, and 15 or 20 killed. This little advantage inspirited the Americans prodigiously. They found it required only resolution and good officers to make an enemy they stood too much in dread of, give way.* The men will fight if led on by good officers, and as certainly run away if commanded by scoundrels. Sunday was an instance of the last, and the next day a confirmation of the first assertion. On Sunday, the officers, instead of heading and leading the men on to attack the enemy when landing, where the first to scamper off.

FROM MARSHALL'S LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

Sept. 15, 1776. Having taken possession of New York, Gen. Howe stationed a few troops in the town ; and, with the main body of his army, encamped on the island, near the American lines. His right was at Horen's Hook on the East river, and his left reached the North river near Bloomingdale ; so that his encampment extended quite across the island, which is, in this place scarcely two miles wide ; and both his flanks were covered by his ships.

The strongest point of the American lines was at Kingsbridge, both sides of which had been carefully fortified. McGowan's Pass and Morris's Heights were also occupied in considerable force, and rendered capable of being defended against superior numbers. A strong detachment was posted in an entrenched camp on the heights Haerlem within about a mile and a half of the British lines.

The present position of the armies favoured the views of the American General. He wished to habituate his soldiers, by a series of successful skirmishes, to meet the enemy in the field ; and he persuaded himself that his detachments, knowing a strong intrenched camp to be immediately in their rear, would engage without apprehension, would soon display their native courage, and would speedily regain the confidence they had lost.

Opportunities to make the experiments he wished were soon afforded. The day after the retreat from New York, the British appeared (*Sept.* 16) in considerable force in the plains between the two camps ; and the General immediately rode to his advanced posts, in order to make in person such arrangements as this movement

* Gen. Washington's letter to Gen. Gates.

might require. Soon after his arrival, Lieut Col. Knowlton of Connecticut, who, at the head of a corps of rangers, had been skirmishing with this party, came in, and stated their numbers on conjecture at about 300 men, the main body being concealed in a wood.

The General ordered Col Knowlton with his rangers, and Major Leitch with three companies of the third Virginia regiment, which had joined the army only the preceding day, to gain their rear, while he amused them with the appearance of making dispositions to attack their front.

This plan succeeded. The British ran eagerly down a hill, in order to possess themselves of some fences and bushes, which presented an advantageous position against the party expected in front ; and a firing commenced—but at too great a distance to do any execution. In the meantime Colonel Knowlton, not being precisely acquainted with their new position, made his attack rather on their flank than rear, and a warm action ensued.

In a short time, Major Leitch, who had led the detachment with great intrepidity, was brought off the ground mortally wounded, having received three balls through his body ; and soon after the gallant Colonel Knowlton also fell. Not discouraged by the loss of their field officers, the captains maintained their ground, and continued the action with great animation. The British were reinforced ; and General Washington ordered some detachments from the adjacent regiments of New England and Maryland, to the support of the Americans. Thus reinforced, they made a gallant charge, drove the enemy out of the wood into the plain, and were pressing him still farther, when the General content with the present advantage, called back his troops to their intrenchments.*

In this sharp conflict, the loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, did not exceed fifty men. The British lost more than double that number. But the real importance of the affair was derived from its operation on the spirits of the whole army. It was the first success they had obtained during this campaign ; and its influence was very discernible. To give it the more effect, the parole next day was Leitch ; and the General in his orders publicly thanked the troops under the command of that officer, who had first advanced on the enemy, and the others who had so resolutely supported them.

* The author received the account of this skirmish from the Colonel of the third Virginia regiment, and from the Captains commanding the companies that were engaged.

He contrasted their conduct with that which had been exhibited the day before ; and the result, he said evidenced what might be done where officers and soldiers would exert themselves. Once more, therefore, he called upon them so to act, as not to disgrace the noble cause in which they were engaged. He appointed a successor to "the gallant and brave Colonel Knowlton who would," he said, "have been an honour to any country, and who had fallen gloriously, fighting at his post."

FROM GEN. HEATH'S MEMIORS.

Sept. 15th. About noon, the British landed at Kepps's Bay. They met with but small resistance, and pushed towards the city, of which they took possession in the afternoon. They availed themselves of some cannon and stores ; but their booty was not very great. Here the Americans, we are sorry to say, did not behave well ; and here it was, as fame hath said, that Gen. Washington threw his hat on the ground, and exclaimed, "Are these the men with which I am to defend America?" But several things may have weight here ;—the wounds received on Long-Island were yet bleeding ; and the officers, if not the men, knew that the city was not to be defended. Maj. Chapman was killed, and Brig. Maj. Wyllis was taken prisoner. A few others were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. The Americans retreated up the island ; and some few, who could not get out of the city that way, escaped in boats over to Paulus Hook, across the river. The house, in the fort at Horn's Hook, was set on fire by a shell, and burnt down. The fort was afterwards abandoned.

Sept. 16th. A little before noon, a smart skirmish happened on the heights west of Haerlem Plain, and south of Morris's house, between a party of Hessian Yagers, British Light-Infantry and Highlanders, and the American riflemen and some other troops, which ended in favour of the latter. The troops fought well, on both sides, and gave great proof of their marksmanship. The Americans had several officers killed and wounded ; among the former, Lieut. Col. Knoulton, of the Connecticut line, and Capt. Gleason, of Nixon's Massachusetts regiment, two excellent officers ; and Maj. Leech, of one of the southern regiments, a brave officer, was among the latter. This skirmish might have brought on a general action ; for both

armies were then within supporting distance of the troops which were engaged.

FROM DR. THACHER'S MILITARY JOURNAL.

Sept. 20, 1776. We have the information, that before our army evacuated the city of New York, General Howe's army landed, under cover of five ships of war, the British und Hessians in two separate divisions. So soon as this was announced to our Commander in Chief, by a heavy cannonade from the men of war, he instantly rode toward our lines, but he was astonished and mortified to find that the troops which had been posted there, and also two brigades which had been ordered to support them, were retreating in great confusion and disorder. He made every effort to rally them, but without success; they were so panic struck that even the shadow of an enemy seemed to increase their precipitate flight. His Excellency, distressed and enraged, drew his sword and snapped his pistols to check them; but they continued their flight without firing a gun; and the General, regardless of his own safety, was in so much hazard, that one of his attendants seized the reins, and gave his horse a different direction.

The following fact is of considerable interest. When retreating from New York, Major General Putnam, at the head of three thousand and five hundred continental troops, was in the rear, and the last that left the city. In order to avoid any of the enemy that might be advancing in the direct road to the city, he made choice of a road parallel with and contiguous to the North River, till he could arrive at a certain angle, whence another road would conduct him in such a direction as that he might form a junction with our army. It so happened that a body of about eight thousand British and Hessians were at the same moment advancing on the road, which would have brought them in immediate contact with General Putnam, before he could have reached the turn into the other road. Most fortunately, the British generals, seeing no prospect of engaging our troops, halted their own, and repaired to the house of Mr. Robert Murray, a quaker and friend of our cause; Mrs. Murray treated them with cake and wine, and they were induced to tarry two hours or more, Governor Tryon frequently joking her about her American friends. By this happy incident, General Putnam, by continuing his march, escaped a recounter with a greatly superior force, which must

have proved fatal to his whole party. Ten minutes, it is said, would have been sufficient for the enemy to have secured the road at the turn, and entirely cut off General Putnam's retreat. It has since become almost a common saying among our officers, that Mrs. Murray saved this part of the American army.

FROM CAPT. GRAYDON'S MEMIORS.

It was now November. I was on guard at a place distinguished by the appellation of *The point of rocks*, which skirted the road leading to Kingsbridge. This was our most advanced picket towards New York, and only separated from that of the enemy by a valley a few hundred yards over. One stormy night I went for shelter to a deserted house on the low ground directly across the road about thirty or forty yards from our post—a deserter who was brought in who informed us that the house was a very unsafe situation as the British patrols passed very near it, and might very easily sweep us off.

SIR WILLIAM HOWE TO LORD GERMAIN.

HEAD QUARTERS, YORK ISLAND, Sept. 21, 1776.

MY LORD—I have the satisfaction to inform your Lordship of his Majesty's troops being in possession of the city of New York.

Upon the rebels abandoning their lines at Brooklyn, the King's army moved from Bedford, leaving Lieut. Gen. Heister encamped upon the heights of Brooklyn with two brigades of Hessians, and one brigade of British at Bedford, and took five positions in the neighbourhood of Newtown, Bushwick, Hell Gate, and Flushing.

The two islands of Montresor and Buchannan were occupied, and batteries raised against the enemy's work at Horne's Hook, commanding the passage at Hell Gate.

On the 15th inst. in the morning three ships of war passed up the North River as far as Bloomingdale, to draw the enemy's attention to that side; and the first division of troops consisting of the light infantry, the British reserve, the Hessian grenadiers and chasseurs, under the command of Lieut. Gen. Clinton, having with him Lieut. Gen. Earl Cornwallis, Major Gen. Vaughan, Brig. Gen. Leslie, and Colonel Donop, embarked at the head of New Town Creek, and

landed about noon upon New York Island, three miles from the town, at a place called Kepp's Bay, under the fire of two forty gun ships and three frigates, viz. Phœnix, Roebuck, Orpheus, Carysfort, and Rose, Commodore Hotham having the direction of the ships and boats.

The rebels had troops in their works round Kepp's Bay ; but their attention being engaged in expectation of the King's troops landing at Stuyvesant's Cove, Horen's Hook, and at Harlem, which they had reason to conclude, Kepp's Bay became only a secondary object of their care. The fire of the shipping being so well directed and so incessant, the enemy could not remain in their works, and the descent was made without the least opposition. The conduct of the officers of the navy do them much honor ; and the behaviour of the seamen belonging to the ships of war and transports employed to row the boats, was highly meritorious. Much praise in particular is due to the masters and men of six transports, that passed the town on the evening of the 14th under a heavy fire, being volunteers, to take troops on board for the more speedy disembarkation of the second division.

The British immediately took post upon the commanding height of Inckenberg, and the Hessians moving towards New York, fell in with a body of the rebels that were retiring from Stuyvesant's Cove, some firing ensued, by which a Brigadier General, other officers, and several men of the rebels were killed and wounded, with the loss of four men killed, and eight wounded on the part of the Hessians. As soon as the second embarkation was landed, the troops advanced towards a corps of the enemy upon a rising ground three miles from Inckenberg, towards Kings-bridge, having McGowan's pass in their rear, upon which they immediately retired to the main body of their army upon Morris's Height. The enemy having evacuated New York soon after the army landed, a brigade took possession of the works in the evening. The prisoners made in the course of this day were about 20 officers and 300 men.

The position the King's army took, on the 15th in the evening, was with the right to Horen's Hook, and the left at the North River near to Bloomingdale ; the rebel army occupying the ground with extensive works on both sides of King's bridge, and a redoubt with cannon upon a height on the west side of the North River opposite to the Blue Bell, where the enemy have their principal work ; in which positions both armies still continue.

On the 16th in the morning a large party of the enemy having passed under cover of the woods near to the advanced posts of the army by way of Vanderwater's Height, the 2^d and 3^d battalions of light infantry, supported by the 42nd regiment pushed forward, and drove them back to their entrenchments, from whence the enemy observing they were not in force, attacked them with near 3000 men, which occasioned the march of the reserve with two field pieces, a battalion of Hessian grenadiers and a company of chasseurs, to prevent the corps engaged from being surrounded; but the light infantry and 42nd regiment with the assistance of the chasseurs and field pieces repulsed the enemy with considerable loss, and obliged them to retire within their works. The enemy's loss is not ascertained; but from the accounts of deserters it is agreed, that they had not less than 300 killed and wounded, and among them a colonel and a major killed. We had eight officers wounded most of them very slightly; fourteen men killed and about 70 wounded.

Maj. Gen. Vaughan was slightly wounded in the thigh on the 15th by a random shot, as he was ascending the heights of Inclenberg with the grenadiers; and I have the pleasure of informing your Lordship that Lieut. Col. Monckton is so well recovered, he has been walking about some days.

[Upcott Collection, IV., 410, N. Y. Historical Society.]

EXTRACT FROM MS. ORDER-BOOK OF BRITISH FOOT GUARDS.

Sept. 17, 1776. The Commander in Chief entertains the highest opinion of the bravery of the few troops that yesterday beat back a very superior body of the Rebels, and desires to return thanks to the Battalion and the officers and men of the Artillery that came to their support and disproves the conduct of the light company in pursuing the Rebels without proper discretion without support—expresses satisfaction at the behaviour of Gen. Clinton's troops who took possession of this Island on the 15th inst.

FROM STEWART'S SKETCHES OF THE HIGHLANDERS.

AFTER the escape of the enemy, active operations were resumed on the 15th of September; and the reserve, which the Royal High-

landers had rejoined after the action at Brooklyn, crossed over the island to New York, three miles above the town, and, after some opposition, took post on the heights. The landing being completed, the Highlanders and Hessians, who were ordered to advance to Bloomingdale, to intercept the enemy, now retreating from New York, fell in with and captured a corps of New England men and Virginians. That night the regiment lay on their arms, occasionally skirmishing with the enemy. On the 16th the light infantry were sent out to dislodge a party of the enemy, which had taken possession of a wood facing the left of the British. The action becoming warm towards the evening, and the enemy pushing on reinforcements, the Highlanders were sent to support the light infantry, when the Americans were quickly driven back to their entrenchments. Perceiving that our force was small, they returned to the attack with 3000 men; but these were likewise repulsed, with considerable loss. In this affair our loss was 14 killed, and 5 officers and 70 men wounded.

FROM HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE FORTY-SECOND, OR, THE ROYAL
HIGHLAND REGIMENT OF FOOT.

HAVING completed the capture of Long Island, the army crossed the river in the middle of September; the Royal Highlanders being with the leading division, landed above New York, and made a movement towards Bloomingdale, to intercept the retreating Americans, when a corps of Virginians and New England men were captured. The Highlanders passed the night under arms, occasionally skirmishing with the enemy; and the commanding officer Major William Murray, narrowly escaped being made prisoner. He was passing from the light infantry battalion, to the regiment, and was beset by an American officer and two soldiers, whom he kept at bay some time, but they eventually closed upon him and threw him down; he was a stout man of great strength of arm, and he wrenched the sword out of the American officer's hand, and made so good use of it that his antagonists fled, before several men of the regiment, who heard the noise could come to his assistance.

On the following day the regiment was ordered to support the light infantry engaged in a wood, and took part in driving a numerous body of Americans to their intrenchments. The enemy renewed the conflict with augmented numbers, and sustained another repulse with

a severe loss in killed and wounded. This being only an affair of out-posts, no detailed account of it was given ; but it was a well-contested action. The Forty-second had one serjeant and three rank and file killed ; Captains Duncan McPherson and John McIntosh, Ensign Alexander McKenzie (who died of his wounds), three serjeants, one piper, two drummers, 47 rank and file wounded.

LIEUT. GEORGE HARRIS OF THE FIFTH REGIMENT OF FOOT TO HIS
UNCLE.

AFTER landing in York Island, we drove the Americans into their works beyond the eighth mile-stone from New York, and thus got possession of the best half of the island. We took post opposite to them, placed our picquets, borrowed a sheep, killed, cooked, and ate some of it, and then went up to sleep on a gate, which we took the liberty of throwing off its hinges, covering our feet with an American tent, for which we should have cut poles and pitched, had it not been so dark. Give me such living as we enjoy at present, such a hut and such company, and I would not care three farthings if we stayed all the winter, for though the mornings and evenings are cold, yet the sun is so hot as to oblige me to put up a blanket as a screen. Tell my best of mothers that my compass has been of the greatest use in enabling me to ascertain the proper aspects for our houses, and has gained me, in fine, the thanks of all parties.

The 16th of September we were ordered to stand to our arms at eleven A.M. and were instantly trotted about three miles (without a halt to draw breath), to support a battalion of light infantry, which had imprudently advanced so far without support as to be in great danger of being cut off. This must have happened, but for our haste. So dangerous a quality is courage without prudence for its guide ; with it, how noble and respectable it makes the man. But to return to our narrative. The instant the front of our columns appeared, the enemy began to retire to their works, and our light infantry to the camp. On our return we were exposed to the fire of the Americans. A man in my company had his hat shot through nearly in the direction of my wound, but the ball merely raised the skin ; and in the battalion on our left a man was shot so dead when lying on the ground, that the next man did not perceive it, but when he got up to stand to his arms, kicked his comrade, thinking he was

asleep, and then found, to his great surprise that he was quite dead, a ball having entered under the ear, and very little blood having issued from it.

Before we started in the morning, our dinner, consisting of a goose and piece of mutton had been put on the fire. The moment we marched, our domestic deposited the above named delicacies on a chaise, and followed us with it to our ground. When the fight was over, he again hung the goose to the fire, but the poor bird had been scarcely half done, when we were ordered to return to our station. There again we commenced cooking, and though without dish, plate, or knife did ample justice to our fare, which we washed down with bad rum and water, and then composed ourselves to rest on our friendly gate. Our baggage joined us the next day.

[Lushington's Life of Lord Harris, p. 78.]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM NEW YORK, DATED SEPT. 23, 1776.

ABOUT four days since the light infantry, who are the van of our army, pressed too gallantly upon a very superior body of the rebels, and drove them off, but with the loss of 125 killed and wounded.

[Upcott Collection, IV., 391, N. Y. Historical Society.]

FROM STEDMAN'S HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WAR.

ON the morning of the 16th September, a detachment was sent out from the main body of the Americans to a wood facing the left flank of the English army. Three companies of our light infantry were dispatched to dislodge them. The enemy, with a seeming intention of retreating to the main body, retired into the interior parts of the wood, where they were reinforced by another detachment; which made it necessary that the remainder of the light infantry, with the 42nd regiment should be sent to support the companies that were engaged. The action was carried on by reinforcements on both sides, and became very warm. The enemy, however, possessed a great advantage from the circumstance of engaging within half a mile of their intrenched camp, whence they could be supplied with fresh troops as often as occasion required. Victory, neverthe-

less, was on the part of the loyalists ; and the Americans retreated with the loss of three hundred killed and wounded.

NOTE.—Manuscript note by Sir Henry Clinton in his Copy of Stedman, now in the Library of John Carter Brown of Providence, R. I. : “The ungovernable impetuosity of the light troops drew us into this Scape. C.”

FROM BRIGADE LIST OF BRITISH ARMY AS ARRANGED AT STATEN
ISLAND, JULY, 1776.

FOUR Battalions of Light Infantry, commanded by Brig. Gen. Alexander Leslie. 1st Battalion Major Thomas Musgrave. 2^d Battalion Major Turner Straubenzee. 3^d Battalion Major Hon. John Maitland. 4th Battalion Major John Johnson.

Corps de Reserve, commanded by Lieut. Gen. Earl Cornwallis, having under him Major Gen. Vaughan. 33^d Regiment Lieut. Col. James Webster. 42^d Royal Highlanders Lieut. Col. Thomas Stirling. 1st Battalion of Grenadiers Lieut. Col. Hon. Henry Monckton. 2^d Battalion Lieut. Col. William Medows. 3^d Battalion Major James Marsh. 4th Battalion Major Charles Stuart.

Corps of Artillery, commanded by Brig.-Gen. Cleavland.

[Beatson's Military Memoirs of Great Britain, VI., 49.]

HESSIAN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTION.

ON the 16th of September quite a brisk fight took place on York Island. The Americans on the morning of this day sent from their camp a strong detachment which came out of the wood and attacked our left wing. The second and third regiments of Light Infantry supported by the 42d Regiment (Highlanders) moved out and drove the enemy back into their entrenchments. The latter did this intentionally to entice the pursuers deeper into the wood where a stronger division was already concealed for their support, computed at three thousand men. Gen. Leslie, who was in command of the British, soon encountered a severe resistance. Col. von Donop as well as the British Regiments next in line to him received orders to move up to their support ; the former moved up with his Yagers and the Grenadier battalion of Linsingen, while he sent off the two other

grenadier battalions of von Block and von Minnigerode to occupy the defile on the road to King's Bridge.

The Yagers who swarmed forward soon came into a hot contest on Hoyland's Hill—when, however, the Linsingen battalion moved up to their support the Americans retired. The Yagers had eight wounded, among them Lt. Heinrichs. The Yagers and the battalions of Grenadiers bivouacked in the wood not far from Bloomingdale, and when the next morning the two other grenadier battalions came up Donop with his brigade encamped here. The Hessians here helped the British out of the mire. Donop, usually so modest, says in his report to General von Heister :

“But for my Yagers, two Regiments of Highlanders and the British infantry would have all, perhaps, been captured, for they were attacked by a force four times their number; and Gen. Leslie had made a great blunder in sending these brave fellows so far in advance in the woods without support.”

On this occasion Capt^s Wredon and Lorey especially distinguished themselves—the former went twenty paces in advance of the Yagers in the firing line, and the latter shot down the leader of the hostile battalion, upon which they turned their backs and fled.

The enemy lost about three hundred killed and wounded, among whom were Colonel Knowlton and Major Leitch both of whom died soon after of their wounds. Our loss amounted to 14 dead and 78 wounded—among the latter, 7 English officers.*

[Translated from *Die deutschen Hülfsstruppen im nordamerikanischen Befreiungskriege, 1776 bis 1783*. Von Max von Elking, corresponding member N. Y. Historical Society.]

FROM REPORT OF MAJOR C. L. BAURMEISTER.

IN DETACHED CAMP NEAR HELL GATE, 24 SEPT. 1776.

On the 16th (Sept) the enemy encamped before Fort Washington in pretty good order; the left wing extending to Harlem. From Fort Washington an entrenchment to King's Bridge, by which they secured a further retreat under the protection of the said fort. The English Light Infantry advanced too quickly on the retreat of the enemy and at Bruckland Hill fell into an ambuscade of four thousand

* From the Journal of General von Heister and the Diary of Captain von Walzburg.

men, and if the Grenadiers and especially the Hessian Yagers had not arrived in time to help them no one of these brave Light Infantry would have escaped. They lost 70 dead and 200 wounded—the enemy must have lost very severely, because no Yager had any ammunition left, and all the Highlanders had fired their last shot. A lieutenant of the Yagers, Heinrichs, was wounded in the left side and also four Yagers. By the Parole of the 17th Genl. Howe, noticing his satisfaction on the happy landing, found it necessary to recommend the corps under the command of General Leslie to be not only brave but more prudent. The British at Bloomingdale encamped in two lines. Some of the enemy's baggage and waggons with flour were taken.

[Translated from original MSS. in possession of Hon. George Bancroft.]

LIEUT. JOHN HEINRICHS TO A. L. SCHLÖZER.

NEW YORK ISLAND, in the district of Harlem, 5 English miles from the City of New York, and 100 yards from Hornhogk on the East River, Sept. 18, 1776.

LAST Sunday (Sept 15) we landed under the thundering rattle of 5 men-of-war, in flat boats from Long Island, on New York Island, about 4 miles from New York city. As skirmishers we usually formed the advance-guard, etc. Briefly; in the afternoon this part of the island was ours. But just as we were about going into quarters, the rebels caused a new alarm, and we were obliged to turn out. I had the right wing of the out-posts; we marched towards King's Bridge, consequently I came close on the East River, which is lined with the finest houses. I had the pleasure of taking possession of all these houses, together with the hostile battery, where I found 5 cannons; the rebels all fled. All the houses were crammed with furniture, rural riches, and jewels; the people however had all fled, and left their slaves behind. But the next day one proprietor after another came back and joyful tears of gratitude rolled down the faces of these formerly happy people, when they found again their houses, fruits, cattle, and all their furniture, and heard from one that I had merely taken possession for them, and delivered their property back to their hands.

The next day the rebels 4000 men strong advanced against our out-posts, and we sustained a severe fire, until towards the afternoon, when they were driven away, as I afterwards heard; for at one o'clock I was compelled to withdraw, as I was shot by a rifle-ball in

the left side of the breast 4 fingers distant from the heart. To whom could I more safely go, and who would receive me in a more friendly manner than they who had but yesterday called me their benefactor, their preserver? As I do not like noise, now still less than ever; I selected for myself, although I could have chosen palaces, a small house on the East River, to which the widow of a New York preacher, Oglyby, had fled with a numerous family of children and step-children. Not far distant was the house or rather the palace of her old father, who had a storehouse full of porcelain, wine, and brandy, but had lost nothing from it.

All these people came back last evening; and the emotion I felt on seeing mother and children, grandfather and grandchildren, &c. down to the black children of the slaves, hugging and kissing each other, so affected my wound, that I got a fever in the night. Not to be thought of are the flatteries the good people showered on me which I did not deserve, as I acted only according to orders.

[Translated from Schlözer's *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, Vol. II., Part vii., p. 99.]

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE
BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS
ON ITS
ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
SEPTEMBER 16, 1876.

At a stated meeting of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in its Hall on Tuesday evening, June 6, 1876, the President, FREDERIC DE PEYSTER, in the chair—

The Executive Committee submitted the following communication :

The Executive Committee take leave to remind the Society of the approaching Centennial Anniversary of the Battle of Harlem Plains, fought on the 16th of September, 1776. The action, though of minor importance, was one of the most brilliant exploits of the Revolutionary War. In a close conflict, the most celebrated of the British regiments, after an unsuccessful effort to break the American lines, were repulsed and driven in confusion by the Continental troops. This success restored confidence to the patriot forces demoralized by the retreat from Long Island and the subsequent landing of the British at Kip's Bay.

Such an incident in the annals of New York should not pass unnoticed in this year of historic commemoration, and it is fitting that this Society should formally celebrate the occasion in an appropriate manner.

A special Committee on Celebrations has recently been appointed by the Executive Committee, and authority is asked of the Society to carry out such programme as may be by them proposed.

MR. JAMES W. BEEKMAN, 2d Vice-President, after some remarks, submitted the following resolution, which was adopted :

Resolved, That the communication of the Executive Committee be referred back to the same Committee, with power.

Extract from the Minutes,

ANDREW WARNER,
Recording Secretary.

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

COMMEMORATION

OF THE

BATTLE OF HARLEM PLAINS.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1876.

A SPECIAL MEETING of the New York Historical Society was this day held, pursuant to its order, to celebrate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the action known as the Battle of Harlem Plains, fought on Monday, September 16th, 1776. To this meeting, on the heights of Bloomingdale, the crest of the hill overlooking Harlem Plains, between 117th and 119th streets, and the Ninth and Tenth avenues, the Governors of all States whose troops were engaged in the battle, our State and City officials, representative regiments of the city military, and numerous distinguished guests were invited.

The proceedings were under the charge of a Committee of One Hundred of the members of the Society. The guests were received at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where a collation was provided, and were escorted by the officers of the Society to the ground, where platforms, gaily decorated with the Continental, Union, State, and City flags, were arranged for their reception. The ground, covered with tents, presented the appearance of an encampment, and from its elevated position commanding extensive views of the North and East Rivers, was visible from a great distance, presenting a scene of rare and animated beauty.

The officers and their guests arrived upon the field at the appointed hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, and were closely followed by the Seventh Regiment, N. Y. S. Militia, who marched past to the position assigned them, where they halted in military formation. In their

rear a large tent had been set up where a generous lunch was provided. At this moment there were not less than ten thousand people present, including a large number of ladies, for whom ample accommodation in seats had been arranged, and the carriage enclosure was also full of gay equipages.

The meeting was called to order by FREDERIC DE PEYSTER, LL.D., the President of the Society, who introduced the REV. MORGAN DIX, D.D., Rector of Trinity Church, who invited the Divine blessing.

Almighty God, Whose kingdom is everlasting, and Whose power is infinite : Have mercy upon all Thy people, and so rule their hearts, that they may above all things seek Thy honor and glory, and faithfully obey all in authority, according to Thy word and ordinance, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, Who hast in all ages showed forth Thy power and mercy in the protection of every nation and people putting their sure trust in Thee : we yield Thee our unfeigned thanks and praise for all Thy public mercies, and more especially for the signal and wonderful manifestations of Thy providence which we commemorate this year. Wherefore, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be ascribed all honor and glory from generation to generation.

Behold, O God our defender, and give peace in our time ; let the invincible defence of Thy power be the bulwark of Thy faithful people ; give us rest evermore from the storm of war, that we may continually serve Thee in all godly quietness and rejoice in giving praise to Thee, Who livest and reignest, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The President, MR. DE PEYSTER, then addressed the meeting, introducing the HON. JOHN JAY, the orator of the day.

In the name of the New York Historical Society, of which I have the honor to be President, and in the exercise of my prerogative, I welcome you all this day to this memorable spot upon which was fought the action, the hundredth anniversary of which we are assembled to celebrate. Especially I welcome the distinguished officials from neighboring States, as well as of our own City, who grace the occasion with their presence, and the officers and men of the gallant Seventh Regiment, who have so cordially and patriotically responded to our invitation, and now clothe this peaceful scene with the bright panoply of war.

We are standing upon the very ground where the hottest of the Battle of Harlem Plains was fought ; and from the crest of this hill we may see to the northward the Point of Rocks, and to the southward McGowan's Pass, whence the rival armies surveyed the field of contest, the struggle, the flight, and the victory.

It is neither my purpose nor within the range of my duty to touch even lightly

upon this historic theme; the battle and its consequences will be related to you by the distinguished gentleman whom the Society has selected as the orator of the day, whose name you will recognize as one familiar in New York annals. But I may call your attention to the fact, that this is the only day which we of New York may properly celebrate in this year of Centennial rejoicing, if we except the day of our National Independence. But you and the orator of the day will pardon me, if I submit one historic reflection, and at the same time answer a not uncommon inquiry: Why does this great city, with its enormous population, celebrate an action which was after all rather a skirmish of outposts than in any true sense a battle? Why dignify with military show, the raising of banners, and the assemblage of this mass of patriotic citizens an action which would seem at first sight worthy of hardly more than a village parade?

In the scale of history events are not measured by ordinary standards. They are great and memorable in proportion to their consequences. Montaigne, the profound observer, of whom it has been well said that he not only depended on the natural force of his own vast and penetrative powers, but that he made of all that he committed his own, referring to the extraordinary combat in which Leonidas with his immortal band defended the passes of his country, remarked that the four famous victories of Greece, the fairest the sun ever shone on—Salamis, Platea, Mycale, and Sicily, never opposed all their united glories to the single glory of Thermopylæ. Yet, this battle—if battle it may be called, the glory of which still shines with undiminished lustre after the lapse of twenty three centuries,—was but the struggle of three hundred men; the death roll of three hundred men and their gallant king, of whom our own Anthon (my dear personal friend), profound classical scholar, has observed, with a knowledge of Grecian character all his own, that “they no doubt considered their persevering stand in the post entrusted to them not as an act of high and heroic devotion, but of simple and indispensable duty.” Looking upon the intelligent faces and martial forms of the gallant regiment, to whom not only our City and our State, but the whole country owes so heavy a debt of gratitude, I am forcibly reminded by this illustration of the ennobling sentiment that duty to country is the one distinguishing trait, embracing all other qualities in itself, of the true soldier.

At the entrance of the pass of Thermopylæ a monument stood in antiquity, bearing only the simple inscription: “Go, traveller, tell at Sparta that we died here in obedience to the laws.” I do not propose to establish a comparison between the action of Harlem Plains and the Spartan fight, save to claim for the one as for the other the glory of its consequences far out of proportion to its own immediate importance. The Persian hosts learned the lesson that Sparta might be annihilated, but never conquered, and the proud veterans of England and the continent, rudely awakened from their dream of easy conquest, on this our battle-field first saw the magnitude of their undertaking, and in their sharp repulse were made to know the temper and the character of the American soldier. A century has passed since the prudent voice of Washington recalled the troops, flushed with victory, from their eager pursuit of the flying foe. A hundred years—the little city which the patriots defended has overrun the island and climbed the very heights whereon they made their last stand, yet this spot, this ridge of hill and yonder plains are all unchanged. The rocks behind which

the flying troops sought shelter are still here to-day, and the grass still grows upon the rich plain below, while all around, northward and southward, east and west, stately buildings show the development of our city, a noble testimony to the wisdom of our fathers. The patriotic enthusiasm which beams upon me from this audience assures me that here at least there is no want of reverence for the past, or love for our country. Our country! well may we exclaim with Cicero: "O! jus eximium nostræ civitatis!" (Oh! matchless right of our country!) All that we are and have is hers of right.

I am glad that the narration of the events of September 16, 1776, has fallen to a son of New York—a gentleman who worthily upholds the honor of his ancestral name—a grandson of that pure, patriotic, and elevated man, the friend of Washington, the first Chief-Justice of the United States, of whom Webster so beautifully said that when the ermine of justice fell on his shoulders it touched nothing less spotless than itself. I beg to introduce to you the HONORABLE JOHN JAY.

On the conclusion of the oration the Rev. RICHARD S. STORRS, D.D., rising to move a resolution of thanks, made the following remarks:

MR. PRESIDENT:—I rise to offer a resolution, which, I am glad to know, has already been anticipated in the judgment and the feeling of every one in this vast and most respectable assemblage who has been able to hear the admirable address to which we have been listening. We must all feel, I am sure, that it has been good to stand together upon these heights, consecrated by the courage and the devotion, and signalized by the success of a hundred years ago. If it be true, as has been said, as has been repeated in the address to which we have listened, that one could not stand at Iona without having his piety revived, or at Marathon without feeling a fresh glow of patriotic impulse, we must all agree that it is still better for us, American citizens, to stand where we are; where no mere picture of distant or ancient battle has been engaging our thoughts; where a fierce struggle, fought to a successful issue, became, as has been shown, a principal condition of our present, permanent, and glorious American liberty. We must rejoice that the defeat and the dismay, the massacre and the retreat of Brooklyn Heights gave place to the success and the victory of Harlem Plains. It is every way ennobling to stand upon these summits, where, through the enveloping murk and gloom, shone forth the transfiguring light of the wisdom and the courage of Washington and his comrades, and to be reminded of the precious blood by the shedding of which freedom and hope were purchased for us.

It is good to remember, too, as we have been told to-day, that not only the men whom history celebrates contributed to the success which we commemorate; that a woman's hand turned the poised scales of destiny, and that to a woman's wit and patriotic courage was due the rescue of Putnam and his division from the troops of General Howe. We do not care to know henceforth the name "Incleberg!" Let it sleep in the historic page! Let it linger only amid the records which eager and patient eyes, like those of our orator, shall explore! Let us rejoice that it

has been swept from present American remembrance by the superseding name of that noble woman which shall cling as now to "Murray Hill," and make it her monument, while New York continues. Let us gratefully remember that to that bright woman, and to the soldiers whose escape she secured, we owe the liberties which we to-day enjoy and boast ! Let us not forget, as we go from these heights, that the artisan pursues his peaceful industry, because the soldier fought here before him ; that this holiday assembly, these holiday flags, the commerce which seeks yonder liquid highways, on the right hand and the left ; all the manifold industries of the city and of the land ; these asylums, our churches and newspapers, our schools and courts, yonder splendid mansions, that beauteous pleasure ground—these all are now possible to us because the soldiers of a hundred years since stood fast and died in our behalf ! And, as we remember this indebtedness to the past, let us honor those who represent those soldiers in the present, with an equal readiness to do and to die ; and let us determine for ourselves, that each of us, by life and labor, will contribute in our peaceful individual ways, as far as it is given us to do it, to the furtherance of the liberty for which they died, the memory of whose sacrifice hallows this ground, to the maintenance of that Republican civilization to whose early beginnings their names and work still give renown !

MR. PRESIDENT : We have been instructed by the careful and various knowledge of our distinguished orator. We have been charmed by the vivid and picturesque grace with which he has unrolled before us this memorable panorama of battle. We have been quickened and inspired by his thoughtful and patriotic eloquence. We shall all, I am sure, rejoice together that the Committee of Arrangements entrusted this office to one of whom it has already been well said that he worthily bears an illustrious name—a name which is so great an inheritance that it takes a good man and a strong man to bear it worthily ! And I know that I simply utter the feeling of all present, when, in behalf of the Society, which has done me the honor to count me among its honorary members, I offer the following resolution :

Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be and are hereby tendered to the Honorable JOHN JAY for his interesting and instructive address of this day, in commemoration of the historic event which took place on this spot a hundred years ago ; and that a copy be requested for publication.

The Hon. JAMES W. BEEKMAN seconded the resolution.

MR. PRESIDENT :—In seconding the resolution which has just been so eloquently offered by the Rev. DR. STORRS, I propose to point out, as a peculiar reason for its adoption, the justice done to New York by this celebration.

I venture to claim for Manhattan more honor for patriotic devotion and courage than it has been usual to accord her. We are accustomed to hear the praises of New England ; and Bunker Hill has eclipsed in fame, by reason of its priority of occurrence, all the other considerable battles of the war of Independence. Yet New York began resistance to British aggression in the street battle of Golden Hill, at the corner of the present John and Pearl streets. The first blood of the American Revolution was there shed, on the 18th of January, 1770 (as has been

NEWSPAPER NOTICES OF THE CELEBRATION.

From the NEW YORK TIMES of Sunday, September 17, 1870.

"Another of the one hundred years old exploits of the Revolutionary War was commemorated yesterday on the high grounds of Harlem, lying between One Hundred and Tenth and One Hundred and Twenty-fifth streets and Ninth and Tenth Avenues. The event was historic, and was celebrated upon historic ground. The battle of Harlem Plains, as a battle, was on a comparatively small scale, but its value was positive and emphatic. It brought no actual disaster to the British arms—it resulted in a little more than a check to their pretensions—but it gave new ardor and confidence to the American troops, and removed the depression which since the battle of Long Island had brooded over the army. The story of the conflict was told by the orator of the day, and, therefore, it needs no recapitulation here. Suffice it to say that the trained veterans of Britain assailed the American position, were driven back by the raw levies of Washington, and retreated from the field. But out of the slight conflict came a bolder bearing, an intrepidity of purpose, to the revolutionary soldiers. They had fought and conquered, and might not the victory be multiplied? The day on which the battle was fought was the birthday of an ardor and energy which culminated in the loftiest triumph, and accordingly it was deemed worthy of commemoration. The Historical Society took the matter in hand, and drew the bright record of the time from the archives of the dead century. Success crowned their undertaking. The demonstration was unique, simple, and patriotic. Some of the best names in the country lent to it their prestige; the people came to the celebration to the number of nearly five thousand; the military were represented by the Seventh Regiment; Rev. Drs. Storrs, Adams, and Dix were among the representatives of the clergy, and in all respects the conflict of a century ago was loyally commemorated. That a Marathon should fire the patriotism of one who stood upon the classic ground, or an Iona make his piety burn with a brighter ray, was the text of the hour, and it was well borne in mind by the assemblage. They stood, after all, on classic ground themselves, and they needed no better reminder of their loyalty. Beneath their eye lay 'a country well worth fighting for' indeed. To the south was the great emporium of the country's commerce and industry; its freighted argosies went by within their view on the waters of the East River and Long Island Sound; the ground sloped away to the distant High Bridge on the north, and a little to

the left they caught a glimpse of the noble Hudson and the Palisades through two dark-green clumps of woodland. All around was something to suggest historic memories. The yellow gable of the old De Peyster House, near which the battle of one hundred years ago was fought, was hard by, and on the broken ground in the valley stood the stone fence behind which the British had made their most desperate stand. It was the spot where the battle was most hotly waged.

"The ceremonial of the day took place on the slope of the hill overlooking the Harlem Plains. A handsome stand had been erected for the members of the Society and their invited guests, and close by was another stand for the Band of the Seventh Regiment. Both were handsomely draped with red cloth, and above them waved the American ensign. Flags displaying the city arms were also flung to the winds. The slopes of the hill were dotted with tents, above all of which waved the Stars and Stripes. The ground was partially enclosed, the fence around being draped in red, white, and blue, and having flags displayed at short intervals. It had been decided to begin the ceremonies at 2.30 o'clock, but matters were not quite in train at that time. It was nearly an hour later when the members of the Historical Society and their guests arrived from the city in carriages, and about the same time the sounds of a military band were heard, and the Seventh Regiment came marching up One Hundred and Tenth street, not far from the spot where, a century before, the British troops had passed. The regiment looked splendidly as it moved along. There was just a flash of sunlight needed to glint back from their bayonets, for the day was dull and sombre, but for all that the pageant was excellent. The regiment drew up on the northern slope of the hill, and the bandsmen in their gay uniforms took their place on their stand. The crowd was now compact and attentive. Ladies were present in large numbers, and most of them were provided with seats. Police were in attendance from the Twenty-second, Thirtieth, Thirty-first, Thirty-second, and Thirty-fifth Precincts, under command of Inspector Speight, but where there was so much disposition toward order there was but small need for their service. On the outer edge of the inclosure space was provided for a band of boys and girls from a neighboring institution, each one of whom carried a miniature American flag. Various trifles indicating the patriotism of the people were to be seen. Among others was a medal commemorative of the occasion, which was largely circulated. It bore on one side the inscription, 'The Centennial year of our national independence.' Beneath this was a portrait of Washington and the date '1876.' On the revers side was inscribed, 'Battle of Harlem Plains, September, 1776.' Among those taking part in the ceremonies of the day or approving of it by their presence were: Gov. Henry Lippitt, of Rhode Island, and staff, including Col. Charles Warren Lippitt, Chief of Personal Staff; Col. Edward Eames; Col. Theodore M. Cook; Gen. Heber Lefavour, Adjutant-General of the State of Rhode Island; Col. J. C. Knight, Paymaster-General; Hon. John Jay; Frederic De Peyster, President of the Historical Society; James W. Beekman, Vice-President; Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs, of Brooklyn; Rev. Dr. Adams, Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix, E. F. Delancey, John Austin Stevens, C. H. Ward, Mayor Wickham, ex-Commissioner Van Nort, George H. Moore, Fordham Morris, Col. Warner, Charles O'Connor, Judge Larremore, Gen. Kilburne Knox, Major Gardner, United States Army; George W. McLean, Major of the Old Guard; County Auditor Earle, Col.

Clarke and Lieut. Col. Fitzgerald, of the Seventh Regiment, and Hosea B. Perkins. The orator of the day was Hon. John Jay, who in eloquent terms told the story of the American triumph on Harlem Plains, and inculcated the virtue of patriotism; while a few words, magnetic, however, in their effect, were addressed to the assemblage by Rev. Dr. Storrs, of Brooklyn.

From the EVENING TELEGRAM of September 16, 1876.

"This afternoon the one hundredth anniversary of the battle of Harlem Plains was celebrated on the very ground where the action took place. On Thursday afternoon the *Telegram* gave a *resumé* of the leading features in that brilliant engagement, and therefore no necessity exists for our now referring to them save in a general way. The locality where the battle was fought lies between 110th and 125th streets, and between Ninth and Tenth avenues, and is one of the very few places which is both near the heart of New York City and celebrated in the history of the American Revolution. For the celebration of this event the day did not dawn as auspiciously as could have been desired. The sunshine: lternated too frequently with shadow, and a rainstorm seemed imminent. The arrangements, however, were made with sense and taste, and carried out in a spirit of good discipline. The plateau upon which the exercises were held is nearly five hundred feet long, and lies between Riverside Park and Harlem Lane. Here a platform and music stand were erected, and tents were pitched for the accommodation of guests. The whole place was alive with flags and gay with bunting. An immense concourse of people were present. These came in carriages, on foot, by the Second, Third, and Eighth avenue cars, and by the Elevated and the Harlem railroads. At the intersection of 118th street and Tenth avenue a carriage-way and a station for teams. Opposite this carriage-way the Seventh Regiment took its stand. The platform was occupied by the members of the New York Historical Society (among whom are to be found some of the most cultured gentlemen of New York), Mayor Wickham, various city authorities, and a number of invited guests, and the orator of the day, the Hon. John Jay. This gentleman is the grandson of John Jay, the first Chief-Justice of the United States. He is now in the prime of his physical and mental powers, and by descent, by wise scholarship, by reverence for historical traditions, and by a rare gift of eloquence, he is peculiarly fitted for the grateful task which devolved upon him. These qualifications were recognized by the vast assembly, for when Mr. Jay came forward he was received with loud and long reverberating applause. After a brief but felicitous preface, he defined the real importance of the battle or skirmish known as that of Harlem Plains. He touched upon the defeat which the Americans had experienced in Brooklyn on August 27th, on the subsequent evacuation of New York, and on the final landing of Howe near Kip's Bay, three miles from the city. He gave a magnificent view of the gallant conduct of Washington, who, reduced to desperation by what he thought the cowardly conduct of his troops, perilled his life by rushing madly into action. He described how, on September 16, 1776, exactly a hundred years ago, the advanced guard of the American line had been driven in by a superior English force.

Washington determined to attack in front, as a feint to draw the enemy down, while Col. Knowlton, gaining the high rocks on the Hudson River side, would attack in the rear. Finally, the orator, in a burst of impassioned rhetoric, related how the English were driven from their successive positions, and took shelter behind a fence about two hundred yards distant, where they were reinforced by a body of Hessians. Mr. Jay drew several brilliant and thrilling pictures complimentary to the patriotic fidelity of the American forces. While doing this, however, he carefully avoided bombast and spread-eagleism. His speech was a fitting embodiment of the centennial spirit, devoid of everything like turgidity and ranting. The whole affair was one of the most thrilling and picturesque of the many commemorations this season has drawn forth. The music, the speech, the applause, the flowers, the green sward, the ripe foliage, the waving handkerchiefs, the equipages, the superb toilets, the gay military trappings, and the beautiful national flags waving over all, made up a scene not soon to be forgotten."

From the NEW YORK HERALD of September 17, 1876.

"Yesterday, at one o'clock, there was a meeting of the Committee of Reception of the Historical Society of the State of New York, at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. The guests received were Governor Henry Lippitt, of Rhode Island; Colonel Charles Warren Lippitt, chief of the personal staff; Colonel Edward Eames, Colonel Theodore M. Cook, General Heber Lefavour, Adjutant-General of the State, and Colonel Jabers C. Knight, Paymaster-General. The reunion, it is hardly necessary to state, was for the purpose of arranging the proceedings to take place later in the day, on the site of the battle of Harlem Plains, on which historic spot Hon. John Jay was to deliver an oration.

"On arriving at the place of celebration, a scene of unrivalled beauty was unfolded. Upon a large plateau upon the edge of a bluff extending from 115th to 125th street, were erected two large covered platforms, festooned in an elaborate manner with American flags; tents were pitched upon the ground, from which floated the national colors; the fences and trees were likewise decorated, and from every point—not excepting the Bloomingdale Lunatic Asylum—there seemed to be a spontaneous display of red, white, and blue. In front stretched the lowlands, now teeming rich with the autumnal vegetation; to the left, the low brick houses of Harlem, seeming almost a phototype of that ancient city in Holland from which it takes its name. Far in the distance the sparkling waters of Long Island Sound laved the dim shores; and, city-ward, the spires of the churches pierced the dull September sky like lances. The only glittering object, however, shining through the ether was the great Cathedral in distant Fifth avenue, whose marble fretwork seemed to be mirrored against the heavens and reflect its glory on the landscape. In gazing westward the winding Hudson was seen washing the feet of the Palisades, and, way beyond, steamers were plying from shore to shore as peacefully as if never battles had been lost or won.

"About three o'clock the Historical Society arrived upon the ground and took possession of the main stand. They were accompanied by the following gentlemen: Governor Lippitt and staff, Mayor W. H. Wickham, Charles O'Connor,

Judge Larremore, ex-Mayor Tiemann, Major Gardner, United States Army; Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix, General Kilbourne Knox, Senator Beekman, Colonel Warner, Major George W. McLean, of the "Old Guard;" Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs, Rev. Dr. Adams, ex-Commissioner Van Nort, County Auditor Earle, James Russell Lowell, Benjamin H. Field, Hosea B. Perkins, Fordham Morris, Henry A. Oakley, G. H. Moore, and F. de Peyster."

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